

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.



Table of Contents

- Sustainability & Resiliency Task Force** 8
 - A Living Document* 10
- The Need for a Community Sustainability and Resiliency Plan**..... 10
 - Climate Change Impacts on the Environment**..... 11
 - Climate Change and Inequity**..... 13
- Rochester Today: Baseline Data**..... 14
- The Case for a Community Sustainability and Resiliency Plan**..... 16
 - Relation to Existing Goals: Globally and Locally**..... 16
 - Collective Outcomes**..... 17
- Focus Areas and Strategies*
 - How to Read This Document**19
 - Climate Change Resiliency** 20
 - City for Health**.....26
 - Vibrant Neighborhoods**.....31
 - Resilient Economy**.....36
 - Accessible Transportation**.....41
 - Environmental Health**.....46
- Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force**..... 49
- Appendix A..... 50
 - I. Task Force Membership 50
 - II. Rochester City Council and Administration..... 52
 - III. Relevant Plans, Priorities, and Resources 52
 - Climate Change Resiliency 52
 - City for Health 53
 - Resilient Economy 53
 - Transportation..... 53
 - Vibrant Neighborhoods..... 53
 - Additional Resources..... 53
 - IV. Summary of Workshops and Planning Process 54
 - V. Location of Additional Resources 56
- Appendix B..... 56

I. Equitable Engagement Community Process..... 56

II. Community Listening Data..... 69

 Community Listening Sessions 70

 Community Survey Responses..... 71

Appendix C..... 74

I. Resources on Equitable Planning 74

This plan was updated from its original version in July 2024.

A Call to Action

A Message from the Mayor



All around us, communities are rethinking the way cities function. The relationships between governments, the environment, and members of a community are changing as cities adopt sustainable growth and development strategies. By emphasizing environmental stewardship, fiscal responsibility, and social equity as core components of sustainability, these strategies underscore that a city is only thriving when all these principles are met.

As mayor, I am proud of the economic, environmental, and social assets that make Rochester a great place to live, work, and play, but I know that we can do better. This plan, created by the community it is designed to serve, will guide Rochester toward becoming a more sustainable, livable city. It will help achieve the city's adopted goals for greenhouse gas emissions reduction to ensure Rochester is a place where our grandchildren are proud to live.

I placed the responsibility of creating this plan into the hands of community members, knowing residents of this city have the knowledge, work ethic, and perspective to turn Rochester into Minnesota's leader in sustainable growth and development. After a year of hard work, it is time to put it into action. This plan will not be successful, however, unless we do it together. It takes the work of a whole community to make a place we all want to live.

“ The larger Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force actively requested input from a broader set of our community, studied the issues which pertain to our city, reviewed issues and recommendations from other organizations and then vetted initial conclusions with individuals and groups in Rochester. Both efforts produced forward-looking pathways for our city to follow into the future. ..

Dave Reichert,
Rochester Energy Commission Chair

Sustainability & Resiliency Task Force

Beginning in 2019, the Mayor created the Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force. To ensure this plan meets the needs of the entire Rochester community, great care was taken to establish a task force that represented 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. A full list of task force members can be found in Appendix A.

Sustainable, Resilient Rochester

Creating Economic, Environmental, & Social Health



The primary responsibilities of the Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force were to develop a vision statement and set goals to define sustainability to the residents, businesses, and organizations of Rochester. 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 the policies, strategies, infrastructure improvements, and tactics that make up this plan.

“ This task force underlines the fundamental connection that exists between environmental crisis and social crisis that we are currently experiencing. It asks of us personal and communal ecological conversion.”

Sister Marlys Jax
Assisi Heights
Spirituality Center

A Community Process

The creation of this plan was led by the community every step of the way. Furthermore, this community leadership 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 with over 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 using surveys created by the task force, which were translated into several languages by Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association. Figure 1, below, illustrates the extensive feedback received from the community during our listening sessions. Equity and inclusion, more community events, and affordable housing are some of the most pressing needs within the community. A more extensive breakdown of this information can be found in Appendix B.

Community Needs: Survey Results

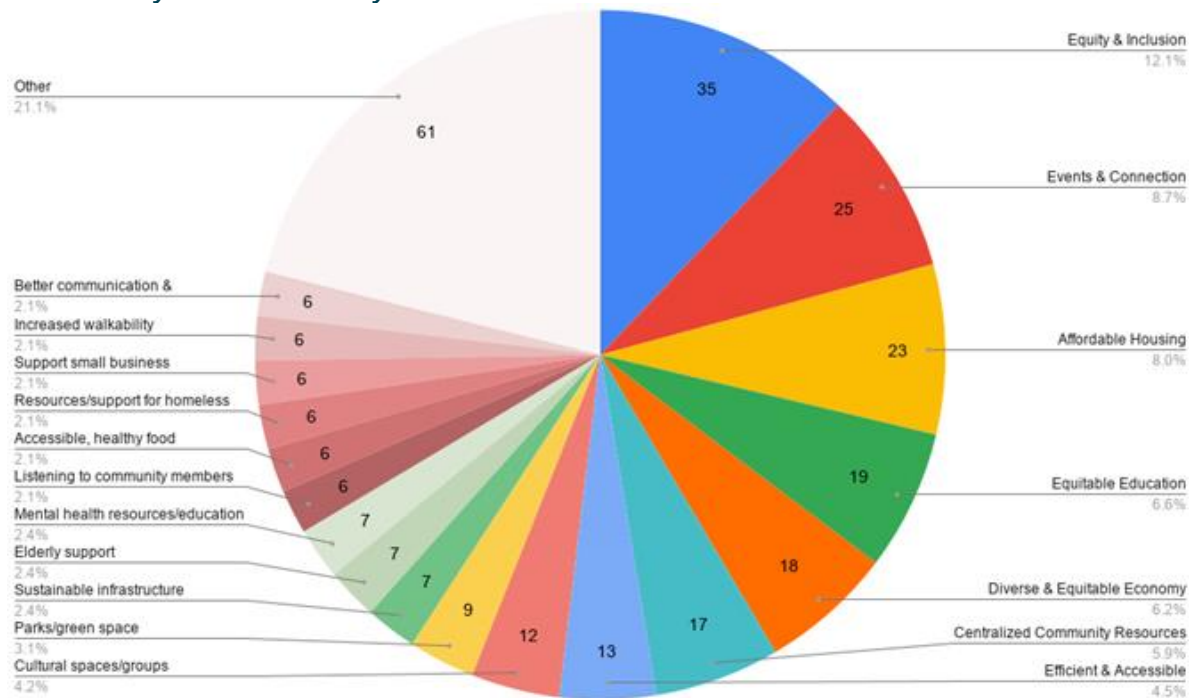


Figure 1: This chart shows needs identified by community listening session participants and survey respondents. The number within each slice of the chart represents the number of individuals who stated that specific need.

The content of this plan is a direct result of the feedback provided from community listening sessions. At the conclusion of the sessions, the task force highlighted key themes and identified gaps that were missing to begin organizing the content of this plan. Much of the feedback from the community focused on issues of equity, which is a central focus of this plan. After the completion of the public outreach phase, task force members created achievable strategies and tactics based on the needs stated by the community. Near the completion of these tactics and strategies, City staff and task force members met again to review the plan with community groups from the initial listening sessions. During these follow-up sessions, these groups were shown how their feedback had been included in the plan and were given additional opportunities to provide input.

Our community will be as involved in the implementation of the plan as they have been with the creation of it. Work done by the project team, which includes City staff and external consultants, has primarily been to support the community, specifically the task force members, and to facilitate the community engagement process to inform the planning efforts. The core project team also worked with City departments to integrate their input and ideas into the plan and its implementation. As we put this plan into action, it will require collaboration across the community and among the government, nonprofits, and the private sector. Without engagement from a broad range of community stakeholders, this plan will not become reality.

The task force has devised a set of accountability tactics to make certain that implementation of the plan honors its goals and vision statement, and results in a more equitable community. These accountability tactics will maintain equity in this next stage of the process and make sure the outcome of this plan is what our community intended.

A Living Document

To address the needs of a dynamic and changing community, this document will be reviewed on an annual basis to assess its relevance. Community members engaged during the creation of this plan have asked to be updated every 6–12 months. During these sessions, community members can provide feedback on work that has been done and to assess the relevance of strategies and tactics not yet completed. The feedback will then be used to update the plan accordingly.

The Need for a Community Sustainability and Resiliency Plan

Our city’s release of planet-warming gases puts our community at a greater risk for economic hardship, extreme weather events, and changes to our ecosystem. Vulnerable populations are at particularly high risk from climate change as they are more exposed to its effects while having fewer resources to cope with it. This plan is essential to confront these issues by reducing Rochester’s emission of greenhouse gases in a manner that increases our community’s equity, connectedness, and ability to overcome challenges. Cities such as Rochester must address climate change as it becomes an increasingly large threat to people around the world.

If greenhouse gases continue to be released at the current rate, it will be impossible to prevent global temperature from rising to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels (Allen et al., 2018). A temperature change of this magnitude would make weather less predictable and increase the prevalence of severe drought, flooding, heat waves, and extreme weather events such as hurricanes and wildfires. Figure 2 shows shifts in rainfall during the month of July to demonstrate the changes already happening because of climate change. There is a clear transition to wetter precipitation patterns in southeastern Minnesota over the past 34 years.

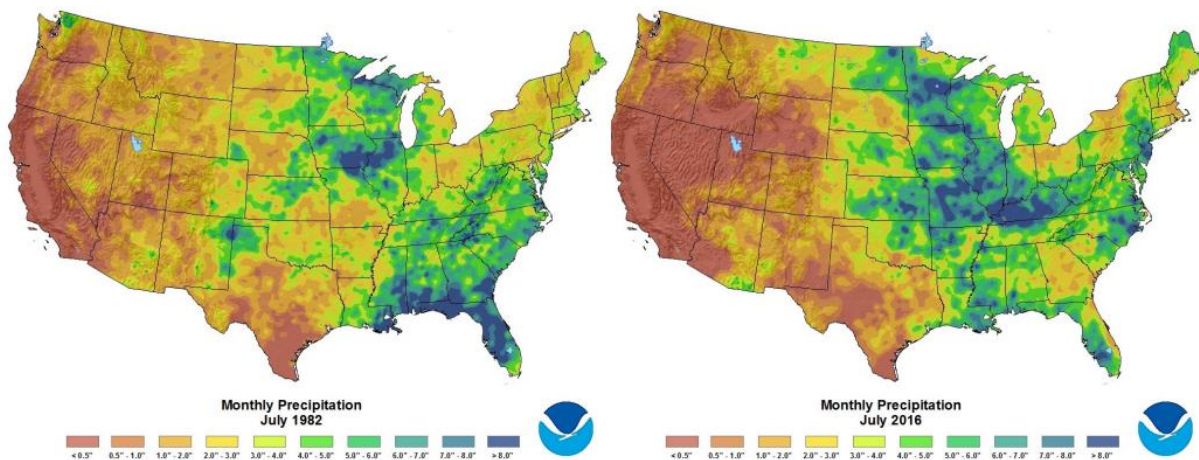


Figure 2: This image shows changes in precipitation from 1982 to 2016 during the month of July. The western half of the United States has seen precipitation trend downward during this time, while areas in the Midwest have seen precipitation increase. These concerning trends will continue if greenhouse gas emissions are not reduced. (Source: NOAA, 2017)

Climate Change Impacts on the Environment

Combined with existing stressors such as habitat loss, pollution, and invasive species, the impacts of climate change will result in substantial reductions in the health and quality of Rochester's ecological systems. If climate change goes unaddressed, it will cause increases in temperature, precipitation, and expansion of invasive insects such as the emerald ash borer. Although species have proven they can adapt to changes in climate, the current shifts are happening far too fast for them to react. Global temperature changes over the past century have occurred 10 times faster than any point during the last 800,000 years (Allen et al., 2018).

Rapid changes in climate will cause habitat ranges to shift, species to go extinct, and biodiversity to decrease. Figure 3 shows how the Midwest's forest composition will change by midcentury under a scenario with reduced greenhouse gas emissions and a scenario with current emissions maintained. Under both scenarios, there is a clear overall reduction in biodiversity. Loss of biodiversity on a large scale has profoundly negative impacts on the resiliency of ecosystems. When ecosystems lose biodiversity, they struggle to remain stable and provide essential services such as flood control, water filtration, crop pollination, and recreational opportunities. If the current rate of greenhouse gas emissions continue, shifts in habitat will reduce ecological health and the value of timber in the Midwest by \$788 billion by the end of the century (USGCRP, 2018). Within southeast Minnesota, the emissions scenarios demonstrate a change from an oak- and hickory-dominated forest to one with higher concentrations of elm, ash, and cottonwood. As mentioned above, ash trees are currently realizing significant damage due to the emerald ash borer infestation, so the impact of this change brings some risk along with it.

Forest Composition Shifts

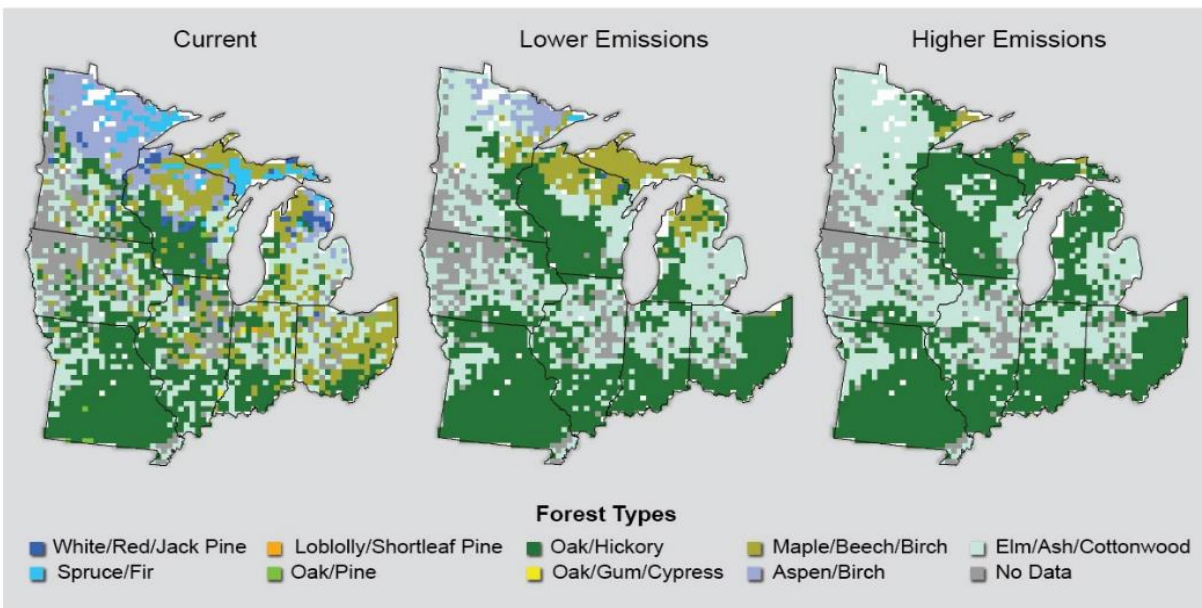


Figure 3: Midcentury changes in forest composition under high and low emission scenarios. Under both scenarios, culturally and economically significant species such as birch and aspen will become far less common. (Source: USGCRP, 2014)

Climate Change Impacts on the Economy

The economic effects of climate change go far beyond forest value. Changes in climate pose risks to both Rochester’s economy and its people. Shifts in the frequency and severity of natural disasters, as well as changes in tourism and agriculture, could significantly impact the health of Rochester’s economy and the safety of its residents. Figure 4 shows the increasing frequency and cost of natural disasters on a national scale. The most recent seven years represented on the chart (2011–2018) have had the greatest number of and most expensive weather-related disasters since 1980.

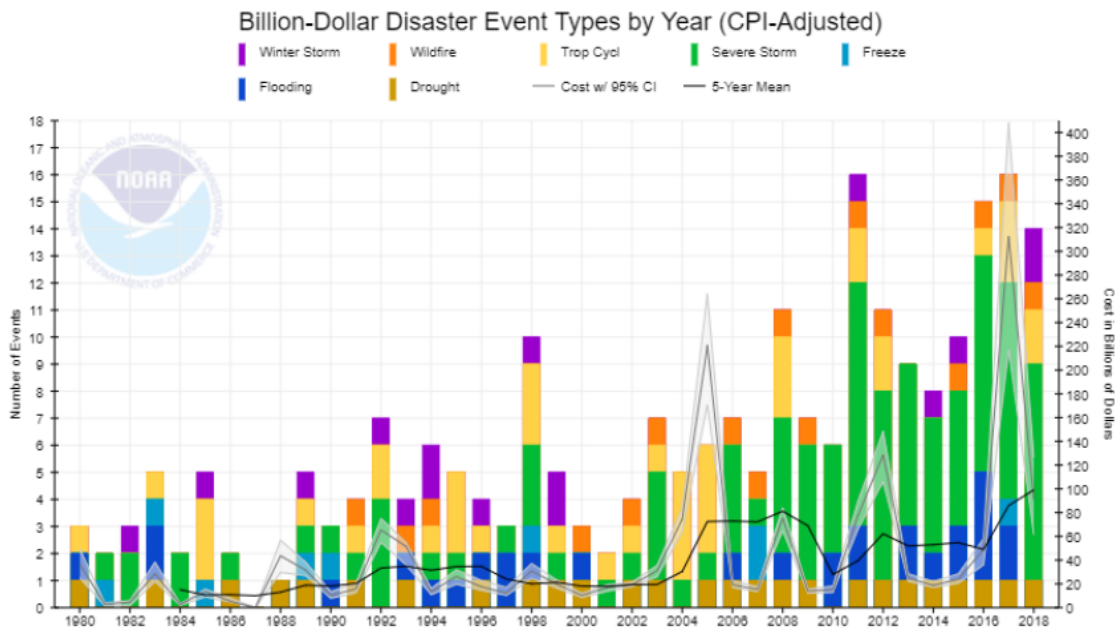


Figure 4: This graph shows the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters. The colored bars demonstrate the type and number of events for each year. The black line shows the cost of relief averaged over five years. (Source: NOAA, 2021)

The economic impacts of climate change will be felt throughout the Midwest. Rising temperatures and the decline in pollinator species is expected to have significant impacts on agriculture, while the increase in severe weather will require more expensive disaster relief. Figure 5 shows the current frequency of natural disasters in each state. While coastal states are most prone to climate disasters, Minnesota has had a total of 32 natural disasters costing \$1 billion or more since 1980. As the effects of climate change become more significant, the frequency and severity of climate events in Minnesota will rise.

As a result of this trend, more money will be spent to address the aftermath of these events. For example, the annual cost of maintaining bridges throughout the Midwest is expected to reach approximately \$400 million by 2050 as flooding becomes a more common issue (USGCRP, 2018). When considering these trends, it becomes increasingly clear that it is too expensive to ignore climate change.

The economic cost of climate change is a burden felt by all Minnesotans. The increasing frequency of natural disasters and extreme weather events has a significant impact on homeowner insurance rates. During the decades leading up to 1998, homeowner insurance rates remained relatively stable in Minnesota. Since then, however, the increased frequency of extreme weather has caused insurance rates to rise by 360%. Minnesota is now one of the most expensive states for homeowner insurance. This burden on homeowners will continue to rise at an alarming rate if climate change goes unaddressed (Huttner, 2021).

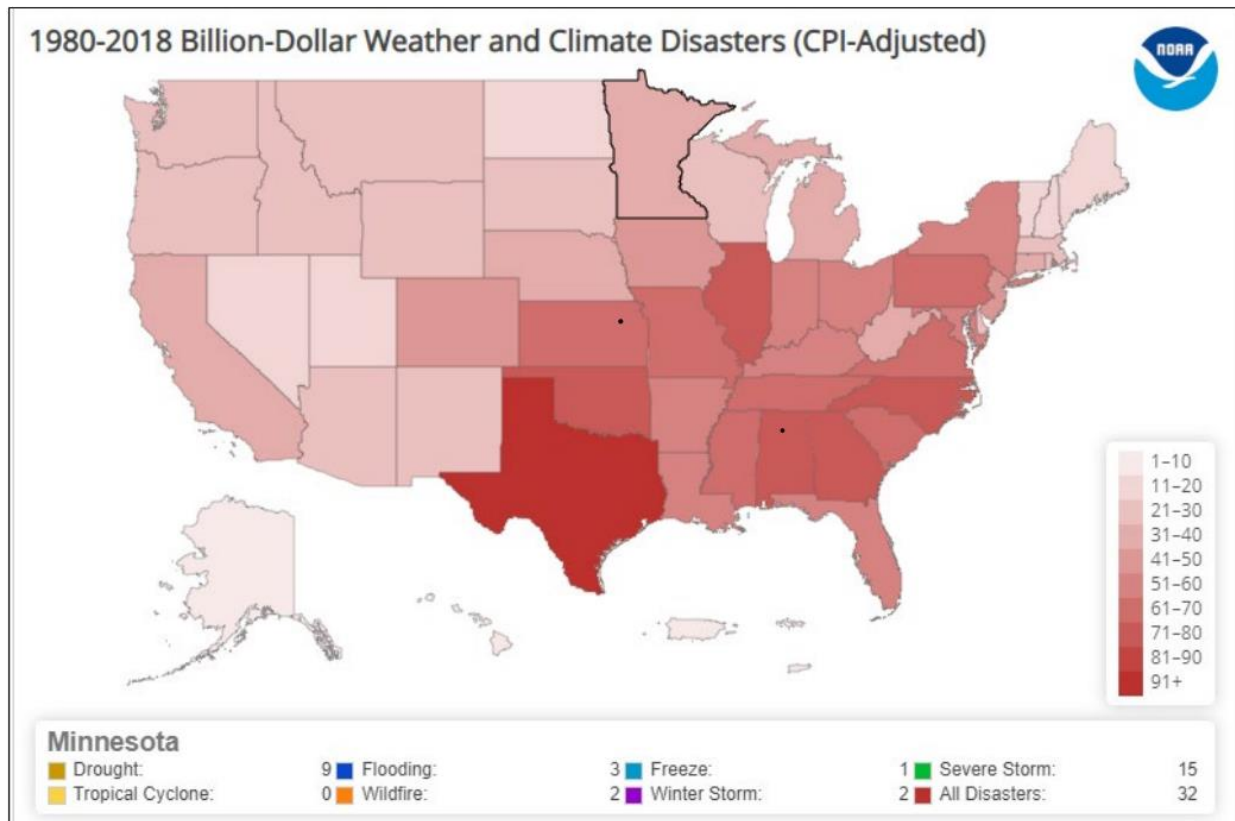


Figure 5: This map shows the number of disasters costing \$1 billion or more in every state between 1980 and 2018. The box at the bottom tracks Minnesota’s billion-dollar disasters by type. (Source: NOAA, 2021)

Climate Change and Inequity

The economic and health impacts of climate change are felt by all people, but they are not felt equally. Vulnerable populations such as older adults, young children, people living in poverty, and people of color are at a greater risk of harm from the effects of climate change. Populations such as these are more likely to live in areas with flood risk, to be less capable of rebounding from severe weather, and to have fewer resources to adapt to changing conditions (USGCRP, 2018). Figure 6 demonstrates the compounding effect different socioeconomic and health conditions have on people’s, and in particular vulnerable communities’, vulnerability to extreme heat in Minnesota. Because of physical health or financial limitations, vulnerable populations are more susceptible to negative impacts from extreme heat. The maps below show that Olmsted County can expect more extreme heat in the future and has a high proportion of vulnerable communities within our region, especially in comparison to surrounding counties.

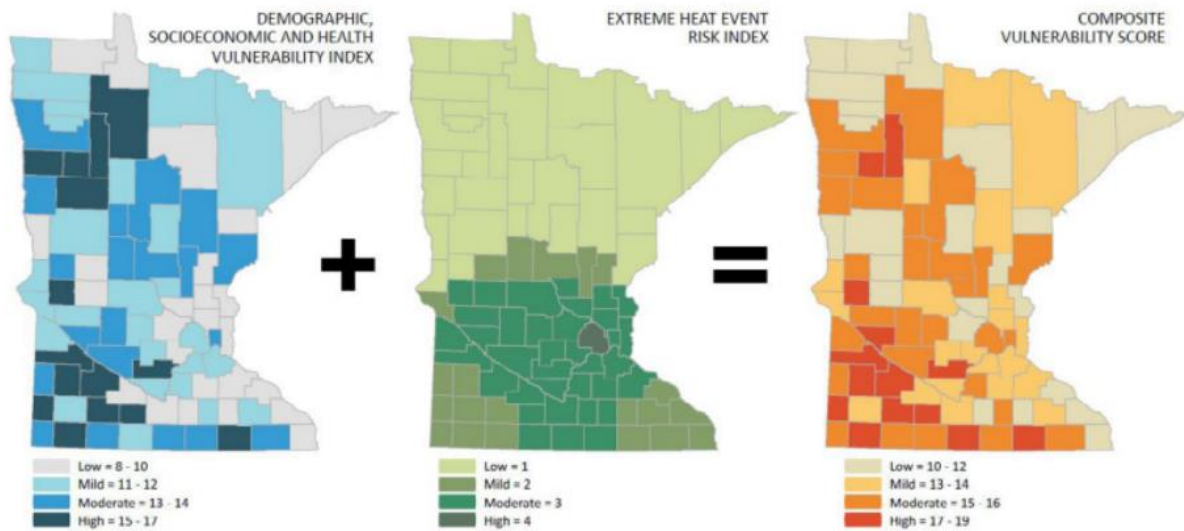


Figure 6: These maps show the risk of extreme heat is greater in counties with more demographic, socioeconomic, and health vulnerabilities. This unequal impact is true of other climate stressors as well. (Source: Minnesota Department of Health, 2014)

Rochester Today: Baseline Data

To address the environmental, financial, and social equity impacts of climate change described above, the City of Rochester adopted a greenhouse gas reduction goal as part of its Energy Action Plan (EAP) in 2017. These goals were updated in 2022 to reflect science-based targets and to align with global efforts to address climate change. Within this document, the community and the City committed to reducing Rochester’s emissions by these amounts on the following timeline:

- 1.5% annual retail energy savings
- Greenhouse gas emissions reductions of:
 - 50% by 2030
 - 100% by 2050

These goals will be achieved through a combination of energy efficiency, renewable energy adoption, and carbon intensity reductions. The EAP includes recommended actions and strategies to decrease energy demand and accelerate the use of low-carbon energy sources across three categories: power generation, transportation, and buildings.

To date, the City of Rochester has made some progress toward meeting these targets, but there is more work to do. The chart below shows progress to date on the city’s combined travel, waste, and energy emissions through 2020.

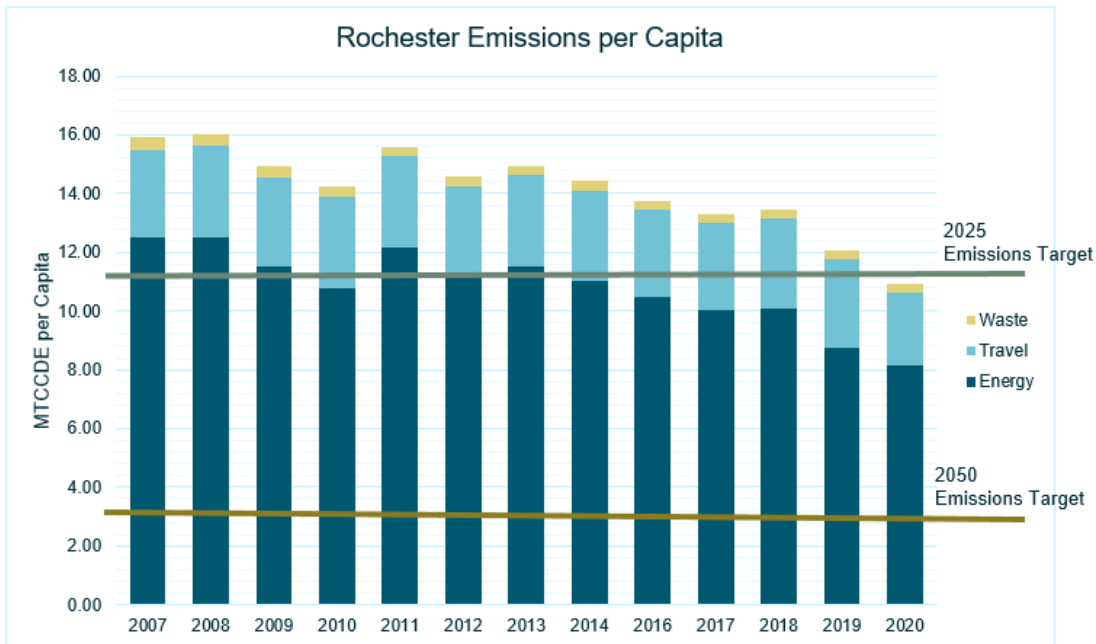


Figure 7: Rochester Emissions Data from Rochester’s Regional Indicators initiative. Urban Land Institute MN & LHB Inc., 2020

Based on the data above, our community has made significant progress in reducing emissions from the building sector. However, there is more work to do to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions coming from the transportation and waste sectors. There are a range of programs, initiatives, and policies in motion to work toward this outcome. On the transportation front, the City updated its Comprehensive Plan, which identified transportation corridors, introduced several mobility-sharing programs in the City, re-zoned areas of the City to introduce greater density along transit corridors, and purchased electric buses to pilot in the City’s transit fleet. The City is also designing a rapid transit system in the downtown to incentivize our community members to transition from single-occupant vehicles.

Olmsted County manages our waste system and has partnered with the City to expand its internal and outward-facing recycling best practices. There are several additional opportunities that are being explored that could reduce the City’s waste-related greenhouse gas emissions. One promising opportunity is the construction of a regional food waste composting program. The County is also interested in adding a materials recovery facility to its waste-to-energy plant to remove recyclable products prior to burning the waste.

Finally, in terms of energy production, the City’s municipal utility, Rochester Public Utilities, is working toward a goal of providing 100% net renewable electricity by 2030. Providing renewable power to the community will have a huge greenhouse gas reduction impact and further the City’s progress toward its goals.

Looking ahead, a combination of reducing energy demand in our built environment, transitioning from fossil-fuel based sources, improving and expanding our transit programs, and supporting waste diversion efforts will continue our city’s progress toward our greenhouse gas reduction targets.

The Case for a Community Sustainability and Resiliency Plan

The plans described above outline a clear path to reduce our community's contribution to climate change. It has become apparent, however, that Rochester must do more than simply reduce its contribution to climate change. The sustainability and resiliency plan aims not only to support emissions reductions goals, but also to build from them to include strategies that increase equity and community resiliency to climatic changes already underway.

Any attempt at reducing our contribution to climate change and preparing for its effects must repair socioeconomic inequalities and protect vulnerable populations. Like ecosystems, members of a community contribute unique services to support the whole, making community success dependent upon the success of each community member. This can be seen in Figure 6, where communities with vulnerable populations are put under greater stress from severe weather such as heat waves. Because of the interdependent nature of communities, an entire community will struggle when inequalities cause only some to be vulnerable. The sustainability and resiliency plan will address this by developing "an equitable, inclusive community where people, economy, and environment are supported and thrive together."

Relation to Existing Goals: Globally and Locally

Climate change is an issue far larger than any one community. For that reason, slowing down climate change must be a collaborative effort where local actions are compounded to create peace and prosperity across the world. Each strategy within this plan will be associated with parts of the council's strategic priorities, the comprehensive plan's core principles, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, contributing toward global collaborative efforts while also satisfying the needs of the Rochester community. Actions both on the local and global level will hopefully curb the greatest impacts of climate change.



To show how this plan is meeting needs determined by the City and by the United Nations, the plan's relationship to these benchmarks will be identified under each strategy. UN Sustainable Development Goal 11, which is to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable," seems to apply to the whole sustainability and resiliency plan. Like the UN, this plan recognizes "that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth — all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests."

The goals within this plan also cover a broad range of city priorities, making it a central element of Rochester's journey to become a leader in sustainable growth and development.

Collective Outcomes

Within this plan are 103 different tactics, each corresponding to one of 33 strategies. Each strategy addresses a discrete community need, and the strategies collectively contribute to one of six focus areas that will allow Rochester to lead in sustainable growth and development.

The six focus 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 interconnected and must be addressed together to create a sustainable city. Through a coordinated effort across these six focus areas: City for Health, Climate Change Resiliency, Accessible Transportation, Vibrant Neighborhoods, Resilient Economy, and Environmental Health, we will create "an equitable, inclusive community where people, economy, and environment are supported and thrive together."

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 can thrive.

“ We met with Task Force representatives to provide input, and again to hear the recommendations that would be brought forward. We are happy that many of the ideas we had for the plan have been integrated into the recommendations. Task Force members were committed to engaging community members of all ages in the process, and we were thankful for being included. We share the vision that the Task Force has created...our futures depend on actions taken today in our city, our state and our nation. We [the youth] are the ones who will be impacted the most by climate change, and we are grateful that [City] leadership has made sustainability, resiliency and equity a priority.

We are eager to work on implementation of recommendations in the plan and already have ideas for ways we can partner with the City and local businesses. ”

Shikha Kumar, Youth Commission Co-Chair, **Ojas Bhagra**, Youth Commission Co-Chair, **Arhan Mehta**, Youth Commission Co-Chair

How to Read this Document

This document uses certain keys and words to demonstrate how each strategy and recommendation relates to other parts of Rochester’s focus areas and goals. See below for a brief description of each of the terms we used to define our work.

Focus Area

One of the six areas of focus for these recommendations



Climate Change Resiliency



City for Health



Vibrant Neighborhoods



Resilient Economy



Accessible Transportation



Environmental Health

Objective

What we think will be the purpose and outcomes of addressing this focus area

Strategy

What we are going to do to reach our objectives



City Council Priority

Indicates that a strategy overlaps with the Rochester City Council’s priorities

Planning2Succeed: 2040

Indicates that a strategy overlaps with the goals of Rochester’s Comprehensive Plan

UN Sustainable Development Goal

Indicates that a strategy overlaps with the goals of the United Nations

Tactic: Actions we are going to take to successfully address the strategies

Justification: Why this tactic is necessary and additional information identified to justify this action



Improve Community Connectivity



Champion Social Equity and Environmental Justice



Emphasize Fiscal Sustainability



Maintain Commitment to Health, Wellness and the Environment



Expand Housing Diversity



Integrate Land Use & Transportation



Enhance the Integrity of Existing Neighborhoods



Focus Area: Climate Change Resiliency



Objective

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.

Strategy C1

Work with state and federal representatives to advocate for policies that address local concerns about climate change



City Council Priority

Economic Vibrancy & Growth Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Advocate for policy changes at the state and federal level that support these sustainability and resiliency recommendations.

Justification: Advocating for policy change at the state and federal level will lead to systems change that benefit our community, in addition to the entire country. This broadens the impact of this community planning effort, leading to more extensive sustainability and equity outcomes. Include recommended policy language in annual legislative priorities list for the City's representatives at the state and federal level. Seek initiatives to engage with and educate local legislative policy analyst as well as state and federal representatives or working groups/task forces/cabinets.

Strategy C2

Improve the climate resiliency of our built environment



City Council Priority

Quality Services, Economic Vibrancy & Growth Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Assess climate change vulnerability and evaluate risk and resiliency by determining flood-prone areas throughout the City.

Justification: Properties within flood-prone areas will be more at risk for damage as the prevalence and severity of storms and precipitation volumes increase. This assessment will focus efforts within the City to protect these properties while also working to design more resilient structures in the future. Evaluate capabilities of current stormwater system and capacity to manage predicted levels of stormwater runoff as a result of climate change. This evaluation will focus the City's ongoing efforts to accomplish the following:

- Protect, buffer, enhance, and restore wetlands, shorelines, and water bodies by providing natural buffer zones, vegetation, and soil-protection zones.
- Preserve undeveloped land by locating projects on previously developed land.
- Manage stormwater by minimizing the impact of development on stormwater runoff quantity, rate, and quality.
- Preserve floodplain functions by limiting development and impacts of development within the floodplain.
- Incorporate green infrastructure wherever possible

Tactic b.: Evaluate funding models which help remediate overall damage or protect households within flood zones.

Justification: Housing along creeks and other flood-prone waterways needs to have the ability to adapt prior to the catastrophe. Funding for residents who live in flood plains or have flood damage (to help w/insurance gaps) will help homeowners adapt to a changing climate. Frequently homes in floodplains are of lower value as a result of their risk and are disproportionately owned by BIPOC community members. Provides resources and education to prepare homeowners to make educated decisions about their property and flood plans. Most issues are localized, and projects necessary to address them at individual sites would exceed existing funding, so new sources will need to be identified. Use projected increases in rainfall to expand likely flood risk areas and work with homeowners in those areas to develop personal flood plans and fund necessary upgrades, moves, insurance, etc.

Tactic c.: When the City starts working with a particular flood-prone area, weave in integration of services like energy audits, weatherization, lead, and asbestos abatement.

Justification: Prioritize engagement with residents by age of housing stock, and, potentially, use resiliency hubs as an outreach strategy for this tactic to allow at-risk properties to access services and implement adaptation strategies to respond to a changing climate. Additional incentives could be integrated to encourage further sustainability and resiliency opportunities. Integrate additional funding models like revolving loan funds and incentives for lenders to support under-resourced borrowers. Identify opportunities to broaden its scope to include the strategy within City for Health—Comprehensive Home Energy Assessment.

Tactic d.: Create a tool to allow community members to share specific issues such as, damaged sidewalks, maintenance problems, potholes, frost heaves, broken lights, etc.

Justification: Infrastructure issues across the City can be easily identified and, ideally, fixed quickly. Additionally, thought needs to be spent on ensuring this tool is accessible to all, and not only used to fix issues by those with the most clout.

Tactic e.: Prioritize the use of materials that are made to last, reducing the ongoing operation, maintenance, and eventual replacement of the materials. Further, as a means to reduce heat island effect, evaluate materials that have a higher solar reflectivity index.

Justification: By using resilient materials, less operations and maintenance will be required over the life of the project, saving the City money, while ensuring safe, climate-adaptive infrastructure for all residents.

Strategy C3

Power our buildings with locally generated renewable electricity



City Council Priority

Quality Services, Economic Vibrancy
& Growth Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Identify and pursue opportunities to locate renewable energy within our community to benefit low-income residents and environmentally minded institutions.

Justification: Establish local solar energy production locations in priority communities within City to maintain self-sufficiency in the event of outages. Additionally, provide opportunities for organizations or individuals to fund or invest in local development opportunities like roofs, capped landfills, parking lots and parking decks, etc. Provide opportunities for low-income residents specifically to participate in cooperative solar opportunities. Allows private owners to help the City meet its sustainability goals and better utilize available roof space for energy production. Evaluate programs to facilitate community solar opportunities or on-site installations. Establish incentives or funding opportunities for landlords to install or subscribe to renewable energy sources, particularly provided to affordable and workforce housing developments within the City.

Tactic b.: Facilitate opportunities for large power users to generate their own renewable power.

Justification: Evaluate opportunities and locate spaces for renewables on roofs, building sides, surface lots, capped landfills, or other underused spaces, and offer opportunities to local businesses to invest in renewable energy, particularly those interested in advancing their environmental goals.

Tactic c.: Require new construction to execute an electrification life-cycle cost analysis and create incentives to reduce the financial gap and increase efficiency.

Justification: This analysis will identify opportunities to power local buildings with renewable power and, likely, increase their efficiency.

Strategy C4

Rochester's Sustainability and Resiliency Commission will recommend a carbon emissions reduction goal for City residences to reach by a specified date



City Council Priority

Affordable Living, Quality Services, Economic Vibrancy & Growth Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Create a deep energy retrofit program for residential properties.

Justification: Integrate sound, sustainable building approaches like passive solar design, electrification, improved insulation, EV charging in garage, and solar-ready design and wiring for new residential construction, especially to reduce energy burden of residents. This could be a partnership with utilities to understand what opportunities exist for residential homes or with consulting firms to analyze homes. This strategy is meant to reduce energy burden, or in other words, to achieve a reasonable cap percentage of utility cost for income, lower rates, etc. This will also reduce energy impact of residents and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Other tactics integrate equitable aspects of approach. Primary funding opportunities are the creation of a green loan fund created by the City or a private lending institution with favorable or no interest rates.

Tactic b.: Prioritize and increase funding or lending options for energy efficiency projects, deep energy retrofits and resiliency strategies in housing for under-resourced residents and multi-family properties.

Justification: Providing easy to access financing, or grants will further energy reduction and greenhouse gas reductions locally. Prioritizing under-resourced residents and renters will help to ensure programs are accessible and maximize the program's impact. This strategy has overlap with City for Health - Home Energy Assessment and Climate Change Resiliency -Improve Climate Resiliency of our Built Environment.

Tactic c.: Evaluate options to design incentive programs or other funding opportunities to support energy reductions in underfunded households or poorly weatherized housing.

Justification: Evaluating and creating incentive and funding opportunities for energy reductions can significantly lower energy costs for low-income families, thereby reducing their financial burdens. Additionally, improving the energy efficiency of poorly weatherized homes contributes to overall lower carbon emissions and enhances the quality of life for residents by providing safe, more affordable living conditions and fostering community resilience.

Tactic d.: Explore feasibility of an energy disclosure ordinance for home sales and apartment rentals.

Justification: Establishes a method to share the energy performance of a home before purchase, increasing transparency and increasing value of efficient structures. This approach will be coupled with an approach to provide funding to low-income homeowners, advancing sustainable and equitable outcomes.

Strategy C5

Rochester's Sustainability and Resiliency Commission will recommend a carbon emissions reduction goal for commercial buildings to reach by a specified date



City Council Priority

Economic Vibrancy & Growth Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Create a deep energy retrofit program for commercial properties.

Justification: Deep energy retrofit can be defined as a whole-building analysis and construction process that aims at achieving on-site energy use minimization in a building by 50% or more compared to the baseline energy use (calculated using utility bills analysis), making use of existing technologies, materials, and construction practices. This will reduce the energy and greenhouse gas impact of these properties. Primary funding opportunities are the creation of a green loan fund created by the City or a private lending institution with favorable or no interest rates.

Tactic b.: Create an ordinance to require energy benchmarking for large commercial properties. Provide incentives, regulatory or otherwise, to benchmarking participants to improve energy efficiency.

Justification: The State of Minnesota has created a statewide energy benchmarking program for large commercial properties. This program will replace the City's previous voluntary energy benchmarking program. The City, along with Rochester Public Utilities, could provide incentives to support benchmarking participants in reducing their building energy use.

Tactic c.: Support State adoption of Sustainable Building Energy Code for new construction of a certain size, and/or work with the State to establish a standard to create a pathway to net-zero buildings.

Justification: This code adoption would increase the rate of energy efficiency and inherent greenhouse gas outcomes here locally. The faster buildings transition to become carbon-free, the more significant portion of emissions will be removed from the City's greenhouse gas accounting. Buildings and the energy sector comprise roughly 73% of the City's current emissions.

Tactic d.: Evaluate the possibility of connecting existing thermal energy networks for new developments, particularly those with a documented pathway to carbon neutrality that aligns with the City's GHG reduction goal.

Justification: Thermal energy networks help to identify and implement very efficient building heating and cooling systems (currently dependent on fossil fuels) at scale and increase sustainability outcomes. These systems also help to reduce the first cost to building development and are a great tool for the facilitation of mixed-income housing projects.

Focus Area: Climate Change Resiliency

Strategy C6

Increase residents' understanding of climate change and its disproportionate impacts on our community



City Council Priority

Quality Services

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Further prevalence of after-school programs, including access to mentors, climate change education with hands on projects, environmental steward apprenticeships, teaching kids energy audits, and winter/outdoor activities, as a means to develop a more integrated social network and community.

Justification: Build knowledge around climate change, mitigation, and adaptation within the community, focusing on environmental justice and climate change impacts on all subgroups of our community. This will build resiliency to future changes our community may face and provides knowledge and skills to for increased livability while promoting community connectedness.

Tactic b.: Increase and encourage diversity within community climate education programs and initiatives.

Justification: Use behavior change best practices like community-based social marketing tactics to work within diverse communities and across the community at large. Employ storytelling practices to engage the community on a more personal level and to connect climate change to individual and culturally-specific values. Offer programming for a variety of community demographics including youth, young people, adults, and elderly. Representation matters. The messenger also is important when considering community education and peer-to-peer learning. It's important that all residents who call our city home see themselves reflected in the initiatives we pursue. Climate change is a community problem, and it's important that community members from all backgrounds understand the importance of community resiliency.

Strategy C7

Support the implementation of Rochester Public Utility's transition to 100% net renewable electricity



City Council Priority

Economic Vibrancy & Growth
Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Support the Rochester Public Utility Board's plan to provide 100% net renewable electricity to Rochester by 2030.

Justification: This development will greatly reduce our communities greenhouse gas emissions and contribute greatly toward minimizing our community's impact on climate change. Reducing the environmental impact of electricity and transitioning to 100% net renewable electricity will reduce the impact of every connected customer in Rochester. There are other impacts of this decision, like improved air quality, fostering community support of renewable energy, and limiting dependence on fossil fuels for power production.

Focus Area: City for Health



Objective

Healthy residents nurture a sustainable and resilient city. Healthy environments, community connectedness, and access to quality health care 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.

Strategy H1

Increase access to health care for our residents with inadequate or no health care



City Council Priority
Quality Services

Planning2Succeed:
2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Develop a comprehensive view of Rochester residents' access to good health care.

Justification: Use existing data, assess new data, and work with impacted communities to create an overview of who does not have access to health care. Disaggregate data by race and ethnicity to understand the impact discrimination has on public health. Create structural and outreach strategies that directly overcome the barriers seen in the data. Fund and implement those strategies. Health is a form of wealth. Our community understands the importance of health care in overall health outcomes and community equity, and this strategy is meant to better understand the health obstacles residents face and how to remove them.

Strategy H2

Resiliency Hubs: Create a network of resource hubs to increase residents' access and education to respond to community needs



City Council Priority

Affordable Living, Quality Services

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Create a hub with access to social services such as housing, accessible food, legal help, etc. These services will be provided via a website and in a physical space in accessible locations.

Justification: Provide complimentary, easily accessible and holistic social service programming and free resources for community members in poverty. Connect to existing programs such as the Senior Advocacy Program and Senior Linkages Line.

Tactic b.: Create a community health hub where services are provided via a website and through pop-ups or at existing health care locations. Prioritize mental health services participation and vaccination information.

Justification: Provide mental and physical health resources while ensuring access to services addressing language, distance, disability, and gender barriers. Create educational promotions to curb disinformation; create space for cross-cultural conversations and community-driven vaccination events. Partners: Olmsted County Public Health, Rochester Community initiative, Rochester Healthy Community Partnership.

Tactic c.: Create an emergency shelter hub where services and resources are provided via the web and existing building spaces. Create new and improve existing safe places to shelter during times of disaster for residents.

Justification: Help communities facing immediate climate threats, such as, flooding, extreme heat and cold, storms, etc., as well as immediate needs of loss of housing, physical danger, and food or water needs. Support and enhance existing strategies outlined in the Emergency Management Plan (Section 8) related to safe places to shelter and community engagement. Education and outreach tactics exist but not at the necessary—build off the EMP and identify opportunities to engage with the community directly, in person, within neighborhoods.

- Assess 211 Data to find gaps in resources and improve connectivity to those resources.
- Work toward goal of not relying on utilities to maintain temperature and comfort.
- Implementation of city-wide access to technology and development of community plan to provide free high quality internet, apps, etc., that would likely require partnerships across sectors.

- Prepare the community for emergency situations; ensure homes have adequate resources through community resources and supply drives.
- Support and enhance education and awareness initiatives as outlined in the Emergency Management Plan (EMP); evaluate opportunity for community liaison to educate and engage with diverse communities.

Strategy H3

Develop comprehensive healthy home assessments



City Council Priority

Affordable Living, Quality Services

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Coordinate and connect home assessments, such as, lead, energy, water, etc. that overlap with and include holistic assessment of all home health parameters, including those that are flood prone, experiencing water intrusion and energy efficiency opportunities and weatherization activities.

Justification: Healthy homes are not accessible to all in our community. Identify funding models to correct and integrate home improvements that improve thermal comfort, indoor air quality, living conditions, water intrusion, and energy performance and protect structures from severe storms. Housing along creeks and other flood-prone waterways needs to be able to adapt to avoid a catastrophe. Provide funding or low interest lending options to homeowners who require these home improvements to create a system that is proactive instead of reactive and prepares for problems before they arise. Establish a “coordinating advocate” — someone outside of the system to coordinate available resources.

Tactic b.: Create a web portal and/or coordinator/healthy home advocate to advocate and promote resources and funding on healthy homes programs

Justification: Connects residents and businesses in the community to celebrate cultures and diversity in Rochester.

Strategy H4

Encourage and develop multigenerational programming within our community



City Council Priority

Quality Services

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Evaluate existing parks programming across similar communities and work with impacted communities to create a more robust education and outreach program for Rochester Parks, providing and integrating opportunities relevant to all ages, ability levels, and cultures.

Justification: Nearly all sports and recreation programs in parks and at Parks and Recreation Facilities are offered through collaboration. Over the past several years, Parks and Recreation has developed activities to respond to program gaps in the community. The “Go, Play, Explore” activity trailer is one example that delivers summer recreation to low income areas. Similar winter programs are offered free to the community. Parks and Recreation needs additional resources to expand programs for low-income neighborhoods and diverse groups currently not represented by program partnerships.

Tactic b.: Evaluate opportunities for local programs that promote skills building specifically through the integration of multiple generations.

Justification: Different generations provide different skills, experiences, and backgrounds— all with something different and unique to bring to the table. Identify community needs such as technology training for seniors facilitated by young adults or de-escalation tactics and childcare training facilitated by seniors. Connecting all ages brings together fresh insight and energy with rich experiences and perspective. This in turn promotes a more welcoming and understanding community, while building a sustainable pipeline that benefits both individuals and the community.



Strategy H5

Support recommendations from the food security assessment through local, economically beneficial actions



City Council Priority

Affordable Living

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Review the recommendations of Rochester's food security assessment and prioritize actions that increase local, economically beneficial solutions. Connect partners, city departments, and residents to implement actions.

Justification: Building our food system and sourcing food locally allows our community to avoid supply chain disruptions experienced by regional or global systems not depend on others and . Additionally, this decreases our community's contributions to carbon emissions from transporting outside of a local system.

Strategy H6

Foster healthy activity and community connectedness

City Council Priority

Quality Services

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: City of Rochester can lead, promote, and encourage healthy activities through setting an example through staff support, community event support, encouragement and planning, and can connect healthy activities and neighborhood events with other areas, groups and populations of the city.

Justification: Encouraging healthy activities and neighborhood events increases the resiliency of residents and overall community connectivity. It provides opportunities for residents to interact and engage with one another, building a more welcoming community. By connecting other areas, groups and populations of the city we can ensure that events are diverse and equitable through location and those involved.

Focus Area: Vibrant Neighborhoods



Objective

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.

Strategy N1

Promote positive changes to our community that have developed as a result of the pandemic



City Council Priority
Quality Services

Planning2Succeed:
2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Amplify messages regarding habits, lifestyle changes, and resources related to the pandemic that have had an overall positive effect.

Justification: By amplifying messages, such as what has been written on in the “Social Connectedness in a Time of Social Distancing” report written by United Way’s Connections Learning Cohort, this tactic will highlight the economic, social, and environmental benefits that have resulted from the pandemic and how we might extend those benefits into the future. Changes in how we support local businesses and increased time and activity outside will help improve mental and physical health and resiliency of the community.

Strategy N2

Ensure all residents and visitors enjoy the same level of safety and security regardless of race, ethnicity, age, disability, gender orientation, or immigration status



City Council Priority

Quality Services

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Utilize existing community listening data and knowledge around resident's lived experiences to evaluate opportunities and actions for education and reform.

Justification: Integrate internal City initiatives to address diversity, equity, and inclusion and build them out on a broader community scale. Further understand residents' lived experiences related to safety and security. Explore how to create a truly welcoming community that highlights diversity.

Tactic b.: Create a community safety team, focusing on diverse representation, that can collaborate with the City and community groups to develop prevention and education strategies related to safety and security for neighborhoods and the broader community.

Justification: Focusing on and acknowledging transparency in existing discrepancies in safety between community members.

- Through education, training, and resources, facilitate opportunities within neighborhood groups to increase neighborhood relations.
- Evaluate or develop public awareness campaigns for the community to provide information, education, and resources. Provide actionable steps community members can take.
- Create strategy for community members to know what resources exist and how to access them, in addition to how and where to address public safety concerns. Moving away from previously existing programs like Neighborhood Watch due to negative outcomes and discriminatory actions, presents the opportunity to identify new ways to engage the community in creating a safe and secure Rochester.

This could further assist in the evaluation of new programs or community campaigns to address issues such as hate crimes and bias while strengthening community relationships. Working with City and community organizations help facility systems change at the source, while building trust and creating supportive networks.

Tactic c.: Evaluate opportunities to increase public safety and security through systems change — including review of policies, current guidelines and programs, and internal structures.

Justification: Our community understands that a truly resilient and sustainable community necessitates a feeling of personal safety and trust with public safety departments and other government agencies. Safety comes from healthy relationships and strong, supportive networks. We must start with an internal focus to fix the systems in place currently working against safety and security for all in our community.

Strategy N3

Celebrate, appreciate, and showcase Rochester's expansive cultural diversity and community



City Council Priority

Quality Services

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Fund artists to create culturally relevant pieces that promote equity in Rochester.

Justification: Celebrating cultures, diversity, and diverse events in Rochester, providing spaces to create connection and share different cultures. Encourage senior care and multigenerational programs while celebrating Rochester's diversity and culture. Include Plaques that bring context to the work and introduce the artist to the community.

Tactic b.: Acquire publicly accessible spaces to display created art pieces temporarily or permanently. Include plaques that bring context to the work and introduce the artist to the community.

Justification: Art is beneficial for our mental health and wellbeing. As a health care city, weaving art into the landscape is an important action to take.

Tactic c.: Create, promote and increase accessibility to events throughout the City that showcase cultural diversity through art, food, story-telling, etc., inviting residents, community organizations, and businesses to partner.

Justification: Provides opportunities for face-to-face interactions to increase neighborly relationships, increase understanding of community differences, and create a truly welcoming community. Centers events around equity and celebrating individual, neighborhood, and community-wide identities. Celebrating cultures and establishing overall diversity in representation for the Rochester community.

Strategy N4

Develop and support more robust neighborhood services and programs



City Council Priority

Affordable Living, Quality Services,
Economic Vibrancy & Growth
Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Within the Resiliency Hubs, develop our shared economy to facilitate opportunities for neighborhoods to provide services, share resources, tools, internet access and advance sustainability.

Justification: Promote community connection and access through the sharing of resources and services, such as volunteering needs within neighborhoods (shoveling snow, raking leaves, etc.). This in turn supports multigenerational neighborhoods by connecting such services and resources to those with greater need. Localized supply chains and resource sharing decreases travel needs and associated GHG emissions while increasing support of local businesses and encouraging community connectedness. Services and resources are also closer to home, providing easier, more equitable access and the opportunity to prioritize diverse businesses/services. Include the following:

- Conduct a neighborhood resource assessment to identify assets and sharing opportunities.
- Encourage services within neighborhoods to support connectivity (e.g., food trucks or coffee carts, little free libraries).
- Identify opportunities to increase human capital resources (consumer cooperatives, co-housing, “people power” — targeting senior populations by helping them maintain independence and stay in their homes).
- Evaluate funding opportunities for neighborhood co-op organizers to identify and facilitate community sharing, access resources, and link to resource hubs.
- Create and integrate the concepts of sustainability, education and tool hubs, based either in the community or in neighborhoods.
- Provide internet access, technology needs, tool sharing, and access to educational materials.
- Work with impacted and underserved communities on neighborhood services development

Tactic b.: Identify opportunities to increase the capacity of neighborhood services, such as RNeighbors, to build out more robust neighborhood services and develop our shared economy.

Justification: Several neighborhood programs, services, and resources have been developed within this plan across several strategies. It will be important to ensure the implementation capacity exists, in resources, funding, and staff time. Promoting such neighborhood services provides higher quality of life for all, more affordable living situations, and more resilient and self-sufficient neighborhoods.

Strategy N5

Improve the equity and accessibility of housing in Rochester



City Council Priority

Affordable Living

Planning2Succeed:

2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Identify opportunities to support and enhance existing and new naturally occurring affordable housing, including possible conversion or repurposing of existing structures and assets throughout the City.

Justification: Affordable housing was consistently identified as a community need during our engagement process. As the City continues to grow, it will be important to ensure affordable housing exists without other financial hindrances but rather elements that contribute to affordable living such as access to quality education/schools, childcare, grocery stores, walkability of neighborhoods, transit options, and parks. Affordable housing goes beyond a roof and four walls—it incorporates overall quality of life. Creating a community with naturally occurring affordable housing will in return reduce our community's overall carbon emissions.

Develop a comprehensive view of Rochester residents' access to safe, affordable, and healthy housing. Use disaggregated data to create an overview of who does not have such housing because of economic or social barriers, discrimination, access to finances, etc., including current homeowners or renters who live in substandard housing and cannot afford needed repairs. Address issues of housing segregation by encouraging projects throughout the City's neighborhoods.

Tactic b.: Desegregate housing and reduce disparities in homeownership caused by racist policies put in place by local, state, and federal governments.

Justification: Only 22% of Black households in Olmsted County own a home, compared to 77% of white households. Homeownership is an important social achievement that often allows families to accumulate wealth more easily and be more invested in their communities. Breaking down barriers to homeownership created by racist policies will allow for residents of any race or ethnicity to become more integrated in this community.

Tactic c.: Evaluate availability and access housing that serves specific needs such as LGBTQ+ safe housing, universally designed housing, supportive housing, and housing for people who fail background checks. Explore opportunities to enhance availability.

Justification: Some people have unique housing needs that are not always met by the housing market. Engaging with these residents to understand their needs will allow for the community to provide the right type of housing.

Strategy N6

Ensure all residents have the opportunity to learn English

City Council Priority

Quality Services, Economic Vibrancy & Growth Management

Planning2Succeed:

2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Explore opportunities to collaborate with local entities to assess the accessibility of current programs that teach English. Explore opportunities to enhance or expand these programs to residents of any age, race, ethnicity, or income level.

Justification: In a largely monolingual country, the inability to speak or read English can be a significant barrier. Though it is still highly important to make essential information accessible in multiple languages, providing residents the opportunity to improve their English skills would benefit the entire community.

Focus Area: Resilient Economy



Objective

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.

Strategy RE1

Create integrated downtown and area business centers

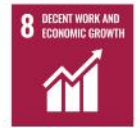


City Council Priority
Economic Vibrancy &
Growth Management

Planning2Succeed:
2040



**UN Sustainable
Development Goal**



Tactic a.: Evaluate and facilitate developments that prioritize living, working, shopping, entertainment, and food in centralized areas.

Justification: This tactic will make communities more walkable and accessible and compliments the node strategy identified in Planning 2 Succeed 2040. Developments that host a diverse array of uses are more attractive, welcoming, and navigable. Developing neighborhoods that have shops, offices, and other amenities near homes would enable residents to walk, bike, or take public transit as they go about their daily lives. Additionally this type of development facilities naturally occurring affordable housing, providing affordability and convenience to working families and residents.

For example, specifically locating daycare either close to downtown businesses or easily accessible from a transit hub or a department store in the downtown area (currently department-like stores are on north and south ends of town, along highways). Prioritize current childcare, food, and transportation deserts within the community to ensure that all resident needs are met and that integrated centers like this are easily accessible to all.

Tactic b.: Repurpose underused or vacant real estate to create complete, walkable communities.

Justification: This tactic will encourage community members to adopt beneficial changes that were made during the pandemic. Addressing neighborhood areas of blight can also encourage investment within an area of the City that can help revitalize neighborhoods, encourage social interactions, and build community belongingness.

Strategy RE2

Support and incentivize local employers and educational institutions to collaborate to employ a local and diverse workforce



City Council Priority

Economic Vibrancy
& Growth Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Evaluate a local college education program and general scholarship fund that supports/subsidizes degrees, particularly for local employers.

Justification: Reference the Hormel Model — pays for employees' dependents to get a two-year degree, this could be extended to other entities - to inform program development. Additional program examples and potential collaboration opportunities exist in the Bridges to Health Care program and the City's new Bridges to Employment program. These cover not only tuition costs, but also childcare, transportation, etc., to ensure no barriers exist.

This tactic would boost the success of both local education institutions and local businesses. Promoting higher education within the community would make us more resilient and offer more opportunities for residents to earn a living wage. These types of programs reduce barriers to education — including tuition, childcare costs, transportation, etc., ensure equity in our workforce development efforts. Beyond the aforementioned career pathways, there is also a need for job skills and readiness programming for active economic opportunities like small business, construction, and business support services.

Tactic b.: Diversify city staff to represent demographics of the community, and encourage local employers to set the same goal.

Justification: This tactic would bring equity into city departments by increasing representation of Black Indigenous People of Color and reduce the racial income gap.



Strategy RE3

Support and increase local & diverse businesses



City Council Priority

Quality Services, Economic Vibrancy & Growth Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Enhance small/local business ambassador programs and/or liaisons for immigrant communities.

Justification: Ambassadors or liaisons would assist immigrant entrepreneurs in navigating the process of starting a business, providing technical assistance and connecting entrepreneurs with local resources developed in other tactics. In addition, create an easily accessible business development toolkit to provide small businesses and entrepreneurs with the tools needed to run a business. This tactic will increase the diversity among business owners and ensure Rochester businesses are more resilient and successful. The toolkit, in addition to an ambassador or liaison, ensures businesses have complete support.

Tactic b.: Develop events and activities to increase support for local businesses.

Justification: This will contribute to neighborhood vitality by providing opportunities for residents to engage with one another. It will also promote local supply chains.

Tactic c.: Evaluate and enhance existing shop local campaigns, create “shop local” storefronts. Build community awareness and accessibility to local vendors, products, and services with the help of an online marketplace.

Justification: Making local businesses more visible and encouraging residents and visitors to shop at them will make Rochester a more resilient and prosperous community. In addition, supporting local businesses creates a cycle of business-community support.

Tactic d.: Evaluate and enhance online marketplace and promote local businesses. This will help integrate or subsidize services to assist local businesses in competing with large, online retailers.

Justification: An online marketplace would give local businesses the accessibility necessary to be competitive with large businesses.

Tactic e.: Create an incubator or pilot programs to test feasibility and success of new business ideas and entrepreneurial endeavors of the region.

Justification: Ensuring a robust incubator program allows Rochester to be a dynamic and adaptable economy. Proper incubation programs can also provide additional support for women and BIPOC-owned businesses to improve the equity of business ownership in Rochester.

Tactic f.: Create a network to facilitate the transfer of goods and services from businesses, government, and individuals among each other.

Justification: The DEI Director and the Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Project Manager are currently leading efforts to review procurement practices that support women and minority business owners in addition to more localized supply chains. Supporting these efforts will not only grow the diversity of our workforce but build our local supply chain through the support of local diverse business owners.

Tactic g.: Establish a grant or funding systems to assist first-time business owners in securing a loan.

Justification: By making loans more accessible, this tactic would allow for business ownership in Rochester to become more diverse and equitable. Paired with a strong support system created by other tactics, this tactic would also make Rochester more vibrant.

Tactic h.: Develop a networking and mentorship program for local businesses, new and existing.

Justification: This tactic provides the opportunity to meet and share ideas, lessons learned, resources, collaborations, etc. A mentorship program would pair an existing, established business with a new business to support them in their first year (and beyond). Networking and mentorship programs exist to an extent in Rochester and the surrounding region but could benefit from increased diversity. Connecting new entrepreneurs with established members of the local business community provides resources and support, providing equal access to assistance while facilitating social cohesion and community connectedness. Ensuring there is diversity in representation and programming provides for continued growth of diverse businesses, in turn creating a more resilient local economy.

Tactic i: Evaluate a resiliency tax or fund to assist local businesses during times of need or economic downturn.

Justification: This fund would protect the City of Rochester from economic downturns. Protecting businesses would in turn protect the community’s resiliency as a whole. Will need to determine what constitutes an economic downturn, who manages the fund, etc.



Strategy RE4

Create and facilitate career skills and workforce development opportunities for young people that support living wages



City Council Priority

Economic Vibrancy & Growth Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Evaluate and enhance youth and young adult development programs. Working with impacted communities, work with community partners to identify ways to improve programs or create new programs to build success at every age level.

Justification: This tactic would help make Rochester a safe, cohesive community where youth can develop their skills and achieve long-term success. By connecting youth in Rochester with a broad range of mentors and community members, networks within the city will become more diverse and resilient.

Tactic b.: Establish summer programs targeted to young people that integrate public art and performances and culture development and celebration.

Justification: This tactic would address several identified community needs including increased access to local art and events as well as acknowledging and promoting cultural diversity. It would build community cohesion, diversity, and culture, while providing opportunities for collaboration and community development. Programs that prioritize and highlight diversity, as well as diversity in participation, will create equity.

Tactic c.: Establish pre-apprenticeship programs and in-school opportunities for career guidance for high schoolers. Introduce young people to a variety of local career opportunities, specifically in the trades.

Justification: This tactic would build community capacity and workforce development through additional education opportunities. It would require partnerships between the public school system, higher-ed institutions, and other local entities, boosting community collaboration and cohesion and providing equal opportunity for participation in Rochester's workforce and economy. Additionally, through increased job opportunity and development, it would promote higher livability for community members. Creating programs that reach diverse and/or marginalized communities will ensure it is equitable.

Tactic d.: Evaluate opportunities to expand or create a local service learning program (multigenerationally) and other paid workforce development.

Justification: This tactic would meet community needs and build capacity by supporting local workforce development. This in turn will provide opportunities for community members to obtain experience and build skills. The program would support needs of the community while promoting skill building for workforce development — for example, jobs in tree/lawn care, sustainability, renewable energy, stormwater infrastructure, etc.

Strategy RE5

Address living wage, prevailing wage, and wage security for the community



City Council Priority

Affordable Living, Quality Services,
Economic Vibrancy & Growth
Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Evaluate policies initiatives and programs, both community wide and with individual entities that can expand our community member's access to living wages.

Justification: Prevailing wages boost worker productivity, reduce injury rates, and increase apprenticeship training, which helps to address the shortage of skilled labor. Prevailing wage policies and laws can help support good wages and benefits, close racial pay gaps, assist in standardizing wages across sectors and ensure employers and contractors aren't undercutting employees or standards. Raising standards for the lowest-wage workers also supports strong income growth throughout the labor market. Additionally, without adequate wages we will continue to struggle to keep up with housing demand and overall affordable housing issues. Partner with labor unions, contractors, other business sectors, etc. Review the City's TIF Policy and DMC adopted prevailing wage requirements to inform next steps.

Tactic b.: Research and investigate instances of wage theft throughout the community.

Justification: Rochester has the greatest wage disparity in the state. 24% of Rochester population is POC and majority are in low wage jobs. Top industries that do not offer a living wage include retail, fast food, hospitality, and home health care. In addition, construction is the most rampant industry for wage theft. Wage theft not only affects workers, but undermines the tax base for City and overall government processes. Current resources and capacity to keep up with enforcement is lacking. Understanding where the workforce is now and what we can do to control it and increase inclusion in Rochester will ensure vulnerable populations are treated fairly and receive prevailing wages. Collect disaggregated data to understand the demographics of various industries in Rochester and the trends around wage theft and tax fraud. Disaggregate data by race and ethnicity. Partner with community organizations, impacted communities, and business to lift wages for the greatest amount of people.

Focus Area: Accessible Transportation



Objective

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

Strategy T1

Increase accessibility to transportation for nonnative speakers of English and speakers of sign language



Tactic a.: Create an Accessible Transportation Education Campaign using trusted community connections and messengers to carry transportation information into the broader community and lower dependence on single-occupancy vehicles.

Justification: This tactic will help all residents understand and access our community's alternative transportation and mass transit options — access by more people increases the sustainability outcomes. Further, providing access to these services will increase their use and they are a more affordable option than car ownership. Use existing transit plans and goals, like the City's target to reduce single occupancy vehicle rates to below 50% by 2035 as a tool to inform planning and community education. Include the lessons learned from this community engagement process to implement further corrections to the signage and web application.

Tactic b.: Provide signage that is accessible in multiple languages and abilities. Consider the use of pictures or graphics to communicate.

Justification: Better resources in different languages will help guide, direct, and educate residents. The signage should direct to and be located at bus stops, directories, public buildings, parks, public amenities, and public parking. This tactic will help all residents understand and access our community's alternative transportation and mass transit options — the more people with access, the better the sustainability outcomes. Further, providing access to these services will increase their use, and they are a more affordable option than car ownership.

Tactic c.: Provide an accessible transportation app and/or web based translation program with directions in multiple languages.

Justification: This tactic will help all residents understand and access our community's alternative transportation and mass transit options — access by more people means better outcomes for sustainability. Further, providing access to these services will increase their use, and they are a more affordable option than car ownership.

Strategy T2

Support and increase initiatives, policies, and programs that accelerate the transition to lower-carbon transportation



City Council Priority

Affordable Living, Economic Vibrancy & Growth Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Develop and support an electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure plan with goals and tactics within strategy in coordination with other public agencies, businesses, residents, and private employers.

Justification: As our community transitions to electric vehicles, it is critical to build out community infrastructure to support this transition. Coordinating with other public and private organizations will identify opportunities for efficiency and collaboration and prevent redundant charging interventions.

Tactic b.: Require EV charging stations for new buildings, especially multi-family residential.

Justification: Explore cost implications and possible zoning changes for parking as a cost-saving measure to facilitate this approach. Consider the introduction of electrified car-share service to these buildings as well, especially affordable housing or mixed-income projects. This tactic will build out the necessary infrastructure to make electric vehicles an option for renters in our community. More electric vehicles reduce community emissions, and ensuring renters have access to this efficient technology (or electric car-share program) will reduce their operating expenses, and make an electric vehicle ownership (or rental) a viable option.

Tactic c.: Create a goal to transition City's vehicle fleet, bus fleet and school's fleet to electric by a certain date.

Justification: More electric vehicles will reduce the emissions from the City's transportation sector. Further, reducing the health impacts (e.g. from diesel fumes) from mass transit and school buses will benefit those in our community relying on these transportation options. Review the plan's adopted by Chicago and New York to inform the City's goal-setting.

Tactic d.: Create incentives for electric vehicle charging stations and adoption of electric vehicles. Prioritize public-facing interventions in low-income neighborhoods.

Justification: More electric vehicles will reduce the emissions from the City's transportation sector. Further, providing public charging stations in neighborhoods, particularly low-income areas, will facilitate the introduction of electric car-sharing programs focused on households with a financial barrier to car ownership.

Strategy T3

Generate more safe, economical, multimodal options prioritizing black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and low-income communities



City Council Priority

Affordable Living, Quality Services, Economic Vibrancy & Growth Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Evaluate options (public transit, bike-sharing, car-sharing, scooter-sharing, bikes and bike racks, etc.) to link first and last mile affordable options, as well as basic community services (food, community gardens, Channel One) to BIPOC, low-income communities.

Justification: Providing sustainable alternative transportation options, particularly in areas of the City where car ownership poses a financial barrier will further sustainable and equitable outcomes. Further, providing these alternative transportation options will limit the purchase of inexpensive vehicles which tend to be older, and more environmentally damaging. Include infrastructure connections, like bike lanes and pedestrian improvements, as part of this effort. Evaluate existing infrastructure to ensure safety.

Tactic b.: Create electric car-sharing and expand bike-sharing, scooter-sharing, and other active mobility programs prioritizing service to low-income communities and BIPOC neighborhoods.

Justification: Based on the analysis above and the presence or lack of options in the community, integrate and provide alternative transportation options to facilitate less miles traveled.

Tactic c.: Provide dignified public transit shelters throughout City and prioritize low-income communities and areas with transit-dependent riders.

Justification: This tactic will facilitate the use of mass transit in our community, and provide safety for the system's most frequent riders.

Tactic d.: Connect not only the trails, but commuters as well. Consider signage that is easily identifiable and visible to both bikers and drivers.

Justification: Commuters both into and out of downtown will need to access streets, sharing their commute with cars. Ensuring connection not only to recreational trails, but streets provides greater access and increased safety for alternative commuters.

Tactic e.: Evaluate the affordability of driver's education. Explore opportunities to work with local entities to assist low-income residents with the cost of driver's education.

Justification: For many, the price of driver's education can be a major barrier to having a car or participating in a car sharing program. Without the capability to drive, people are far less mobile, limiting their capacity to hold a job.

Strategy T4

Support quick implementation of improvements to public transit



City Council Priority

Affordable Living, Quality Services,
Economic Vibrancy & Growth
Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Prioritize the second phase and any following extensions of the LINK Bus Rapid Transit and serve proximate neighborhoods.

Justification: The second phase of the Bus Rapid Transit project will provide a longer-running transit option to downtown neighborhoods, many of which contain affordable housing for renters or homeowners. This option will increase the value of this property to the benefit of the current homeowners, as well as provide a reliable electrified transit option that will advance the City's environmental goals.

Tactic b.: Evaluate the cost and benefits for a 24/7 mass transit service in community based on success of Bus Rapid Transit projects.

Justification: Providing 24/7 transit will limit the number of single-occupied vehicles in our downtown throughout the day, limiting transportation-related emission. Further, the option of transit after 5 p.m. and before 9 a.m. will reduce the financial burden of workers needing to find transportation options to work.

Tactic c.: Include bike accessibility on rapid transit equipment, along with educational guidance.

Justification: This ensures commuters can connect first/last mile to their destinations if needed, allowing increased access to public transportation.

Strategy T5

Promote mobility-sharing and active commuting practices such as biking and walking as a means of transportation



City Council Priority

Affordable Living, Quality Services,
Economic Vibrancy & Growth
Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Support Creation of a Bike and Pedestrian Coordinator position at the City to implement tactics that will make Rochester a community that is safe to walk or bike, including driver education.

Justification: A full-time position within the City focusing on pedestrian and bike connectivity will lead to sustainable and equitable outcomes for the community, particularly if their work plan is to implement the tactics identified within the Accessible Transportation focus area.

Tactic b.: Set a target certification level for Bike-Friendly City (Silver or Gold) to build consensus and set the bar for Rochester's walking and biking infrastructure.

Justification: This goal-setting exercise will create community consensus toward the prioritization of safe bike travel. More bikes on the street and trails reduces car travel, improves health, and offers equitable options for those who can't afford car ownership. Encourage bike infrastructure at businesses, including City facilities throughout town.

Tactic c.: Evaluate zoning policy changes for new developments in town and require sidewalks for safe community service access.

Justification: Review with Community Development Department to understand common practice based on new guidance from the Comprehensive Plan and Unified Development Code and implement an approach to connect neighborhoods through safe pedestrian and bike pathways.

Tactic d.: Provide free and secured covered bike parking options in downtown garages by their entrance to encourage alternative transportation habits.

Justification: This tactic provides critical infrastructure for bike riders throughout the year to encourage their proliferation. More bikes on the street and trails reduces car travel, improves health, and offers equitable options for those who can't afford car ownership. Integrate charging stations for ebikes.

Tactic e.: Create a bike/walk promotion campaign to encourage alternative transportation habits, focusing both on trails and streets.

Justification: Prioritize community events across areas of City, and connect them to trail system to allow a broad range of community members to attend. Prioritize kids walking/biking as a means of transportation and evaluate options such as "open streets" to educate and build confidence in safely commuting. Work with community groups and resources like the Safe Route to School Coordinator, Rochester Public Schools, and Olmsted County, among others, to assist with promotional activities. Education should also cover car and bike safety.

Focus Area: Environmental Health



Objective

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.

Strategy E1

Improve land and soil health



City Council Priority

Affordable Living, Economic Vibrancy & Growth Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Increase food accessibility and food security in Rochester, especially in low-income neighborhoods.

Justification: Local food production grows community, supports the local economy, and creates a more resilient and sustainable city. Evaluate options for City support for small, local farms and year-round agriculture, including additional farmers markets. Develop options for sustainable foraging/curated public orchards/and other opportunities for food sources on public/private/quasi public spaces, and agricultural practices that won't contribute nutrient loading to our waterways. Incorporate bee farms as possible to the strategies above to build pollinator populations and protect local agriculture. Leverage the results of the food security analysis to inform strategies.

Tactic b.: Promote outreach and education programs on sustainable agriculture and the benefits of local food systems through community workshops, gardens, and farm tours, among others.

Justification: Provides accessible, local food to community, especially low-income and food-insecure residents. Collaborate with local institutions and existing nonprofits and other organizations to promote and offer such programming. Topic ideas could include soil management, cultural diversity in farming practices, permaculture, water conservation, food storage, composting, livestock care, beekeeping, and more.

Tactic c.: Develop options for use of vacant public/private/quasi-public space for community gardens and garden education along with carbon sequestration efforts.

Justification: Provides accessible, local food to community, especially low-income and food-insecure residents. Establish native plantings to prevent soil erosion and increase carbon sequestration; regulate pesticide use; provide accessible, local food sources for community. Creating a carbon offset program will help provide funding to incentivize more tree canopy in the City and provide a funding source to further its impact. Prioritize vacant lots and other green space first as parks are a community-wide resource. Evaluate an opportunity to create a carbon offset program for planting trees locally.

Tactic d.: Provide equal access and investment in parks and open space across the city. Ensure community needs are met through planning activities.

Justification: Creating space for everyone to use and enjoy, increasing community and cultural connectedness.

Tactic e.: Evaluate and implement alternatives to pesticides and fertilizers in landscaping practices and formalize an integrated pest management program within the City.

Justification: Reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers minimizes risks to people and the environment, protecting pollinators, local surface waters, and human health.

Tactic f.: Increase and encourage the transition to native lawns for Rochester residents throughout the community.

Justification: Converting lawns to native plantings will provide local ecological benefits, reduce water consumption, and minimize stormwater issues. The current grant program through Rochester Public Works is underused.



Strategy E2

Protect and conserve water



City Council Priority

Quality Services, Economic Vibrancy & Growth Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Protect aquifers, other drinking water sources, and water infrastructure through improving soil health, assessing available water data and applying protections and emergency measures that address long term effectiveness.

Justification: The protection of existing water assets ensures the health and availability of our community's water resources. Support Rochester public Utility's Wellhead Protection Plan, in particular sections part 2: sections 5, 6, and 7.

Tactic b.: Establish targets for reducing community and city water use.

Justification: As the drinking water for Rochester is sourced from aquifers, conservation will help provide clean, affordable drinking water is available to Rochester residents for generations to come. Establishing a goal to reduce water consumption is an essential first step to save this resource.

Tactic c.: Identify and implement programs and practices to reduce water consumption.

Justification: Reduction programs will provide for the long-term sustainability and availability of our aquifer for generations to come. Review existing incentive programs and outreach and integrate into existing sustainability programming. Develop a safe tap water education campaign.

Strategy E3

Ensure healthy air quality



City Council Priority

Quality Services, Economic Vibrancy & Growth Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Share air quality data with health care providers and communicate the data available to the broader community — yearly/quarterly State of the Air report.

Justification: Preserving our local air quality is important, particularly given our community's focus on health. Limiting secondhand smoke, monitoring pollutants, and using this information to make better community decisions will suit the City well in the long term.

Tactic b.: Establish an indoor air act in addition to a smoke-free living campaign (overlap with healthy homes) and encourage a smoke-free living policy in multi-family buildings.

Justification: Preserving our local air quality is important, particularly given our community's focus on health. Limiting secondhand smoke, monitoring pollutants, and using this information to make better community decisions will suit the City well in the long term.

Tactic c.: Evaluate potential air quality ordinance or air quality regulations for the City of Rochester that address burning and emissions from building or home heating systems.

Justification: Preserving our local air quality is important, particularly given our community's focus on health. Limiting secondhand smoke, monitoring pollutants, and using this information to make better community decisions will suit the City well in the long term.

Tactic d.: Further build out and develop a community air-quality monitoring program to inform future program, policy, and infrastructure decisions.

Justification: Preserving our local air-quality is important, particularly given our community's focus on health. Limiting secondhand smoke, monitoring pollutants, and using this information to make better community decisions will suit the City well in the long term.



Strategy E4

Establish a community-wide waste reduction target



City Council Priority

Quality Services, Economic Vibrancy & Growth Management

Planning2Succeed: 2040



UN Sustainable Development Goal



Tactic a.: Ban single-use plastics and other disposables that cannot be recycled.

Justification: Offer incentives or grants to businesses and neighborhood associations to improve diversion rates and encourage the use of alternative products.

Tactic b.: Encourage bulk food or ongoing consumable purchasing at grocery stores.

Justification: The purchase of food or ongoing consumables in bulk limits potential packaging waste and overall store trips which decrease waste and emissions on a systems scale. Further, bulk purchasing typically reduces the cost of products and increases their affordability.

Tactic c.: Encourage or develop reuse stores.

Justification: Reusing products or finding second lives for durable goods reduces the burden on waste collection systems, provides more affordable options to residents, and promotes a sustainable lifestyle across the community.

Tactic d.: Explore means and methods to encourage residents and businesses to engage in recycling best practices. Work with Olmsted County on education opportunities for the community.

Justification: By standardizing waste stations and recycling practices across the community and communicating their effective use, recycling rates will increase.

Tactic e.: Create a single-hauler waste system in Rochester to decrease vehicle traffic, road maintenance, and provide community cost assurance.

Justification: Co-benefits include reduced congestion, truck traffic, and garbage truck traffic particularly in frontline neighborhoods, and major roadways. Further, this approach will provide service cost assurance and prevent waste hauler from increasing costs without oversight.

Tactic f.: Support initiatives to establish a regional composting facility to continue to remove food waste from the local waste stream and create additional environmental benefits.

Justification: Reducing the overall waste to the Olmsted Waste to Energy Facility will result in less burning and related air pollution within the City. Further, repurposing this material will provide local economic and environmental benefit.

Tactic g.: Develop and implement uniform waste and recycling stations across City facilities, including parks and outdoor spaces.

Justification: Currently, waste stations in public areas differ greatly, and in some cases do not offer recycling opportunities. Creating a uniform approach is one step to ask our community members to help achieve our waste diversion targets. It is important to align the approach with the County's recommended best practices.

Tactic h.: Create a standard for diversion of construction and demolition material for new construction and rehabilitation projects.

Justification: Most construction material is diverted to our local landfill facilities. Identifying and implementing policies to encourage construction waste diversion practices will maintain the life of this resource. Highlight and share existing examples within the community of developers and builders actively working to reduce their waste.

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Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force

Appendices

Appendix A

- I. Task Force Membership
- II. Rochester City Council
 - A. Current (2021–2025)
 - B. Former (2018–2021)
- III. Relevant Plans, Priorities, and Resources
- IV. Summary of Workshops and Planning Process
- V. Location of Additional Resources

Appendix B

- I. Equitable Engagement Community Process
- II. Community Listening Data
- III. Community re-engagement data (from May conversations)

Appendix C

- I. Resources on Equitable Planning

Appendix A

I. Task Force Membership

The following is a list of all task force members, including any groups with which they are affiliated.

- Abel Garcia, *Remodeling D.L., LLC—Construction & General Contracting*
- Alyssa Fordham, *CRW Architecture & Design Group*
- Amanda Holloway, *Mayo Clinic*
- Anantha (Andy) Kollengode, *Rochester Vidhyalaya*
- Anna Oldenburg, *Olmsted County Public Health Services*
- Anna Richey, *Conservation Minnesota*
- April Sutor, *Family Service Rochester*
- Armin Budlimic, *Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association*
- Brooke Carlson, *Non-profit Consortium*
- Grace Pesch, *United Way of Olmsted County*
- Dave Reichert, *Rochester Energy Commission*
- David Jiang, *Mayor's Youth Council*
- Edward Cohen, *Historic Southwest Neighborhood Association, Rochester Energy Commission—Former Chair*
- Hema Sai Kishore, *Childcare Providers*
- Ivan Idso, *Transition Rochester, Community Activist*
- Jay Hesley, *University of Minnesota Rochester*
- Marco Lanz, *University of Minnesota Rochester*
- Jeremy Sutton, *Rochester Public Utilities*
- Jeanine Gangeness, *Winona State University Rochester*
- John Eckerman, *Rochester Area Builders*
- Karen Cohen, *Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee—Former Chair*

- Karen Doering, *Citizens Advisory on Transit*
- Karli McElroy, *Rochester Downtown Alliance*
- Kelly Corbin, *Minnesota Department of Transportation, RNeighbors Board*
- Kim Sin, *The Village, University of Minnesota Rochester, Cambodian Community*
- Leticia Flores, *Latinx Community*
- Lizzie Haywood, *People's Food Co-op*
- Lori Colwill, *Digi Doodle Design Owner, Connection to communities with mobility challenges*
- Mike Benike, *Benike Construction*
- Mohamed Sheik Nur, *Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association, Somali Community*
- Nicole Anderson, *Winona State University–Rochester*
- Patrick Seeb, *Destination Medical Center*
- Renee Halsey, *RNeighbors*
- Rick Morris, *Sierra Club*
- Ryan Nolander, *Rochester Area Economic Development Inc.*
- John Wade, *Rochester Area Economic Development Inc.*
- Salma Abdi, *MN Youth Climate Strike, Rochester Olmsted Youth Council*
- Savita Katarya, *Diversity Council*
- Sister Marlys Jax, *Sisters of St. Francis–Assisi*
- Stephanie Hatzenbihler, *City of Rochester Green Team*
- Susan Haskamp, *Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association*
- Tessie Burley, *University of Minnesota Rochester, Student*
- Tom Brinkman, *LIFE Program*
- Tony Hill, *Olmsted County*
- Txerlee Moua, *Hmong Community*
- Wafa Elkhailifa, *Rochester Public Schools*

- Yousif Al Ward, *Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association*

II. Rochester City Council and Administration

The following council members and administrators took part in this plan's creation and approval.

City Administrator: Alison Zelms

Current City Council Members:

- Kim Norton, *Mayor*
- Brooke Carlson, *City Council President*
- Patrick Keane
- Mark Bransford
- Nick Campion
- Kelly Rae Kirkpatrick
- Shaun C. Palmer
- Molly Dennis

Previous City Council Members

- Randy Staver
- Patrick Keane
- Michael Wojcik
- Nick Campion
- Mark Bilderback
- Shaun C. Palmer
- Annalissa Johnson

III. Relevant Plans, Priorities, and Resources

The following resources were used by the Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force to build context for their work. Below are the relevant City plans and other resources organized by focus area.

Climate Change Resiliency

- [2018 Benchmarking Program Report](#)
- [DMC Sustainable Energy Options](#)
- [Energy Action Plan](#)
- [Energy Integration Committee: Strategic Energy Project Plan](#)
 - [EIC Strategic Project Plan, Quick Reference](#)

- [Rochester Public Utilities](#)
 - [2019 Resource Plan Update](#)
 - [Demand Side Management Study](#)
 - [Electrification Market & Technical Assessment](#)
 - [Energy Storage Market & Technical Assessment](#)

City for Health

- [Non-motorized Transportation Analysis, Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan](#)
- [Olmsted County Community Health Needs Assessment](#)
 - [CHNA: At A Glance](#)
- [Rochester Parks & Recreation System Plan](#)

Resilient Economy

- [Rochester Comprehensive Plan 2040](#)
- [DMC Development Plan](#)
- [DMC Development Plan, Executive Summary](#)
- [City of Rochester All Hazard Mitigation Plan](#)
- [Rochester Intercultural Cities Index Questionnaire](#)

Transportation

- [Integrated Transit Studies](#)
- [Non-motorized Transportation Analysis, Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan](#)

Vibrant Neighborhoods

- [About You! Community Asset Inventory](#)
- [Neighborhood Plans: Imagine Slatterly Vision Plan](#)
- [Rochester Parks & Recreation System Plan](#)
- [Rochester Intercultural Cities Index Questionnaire](#)
- [Rochester Comprehensive Plan 2040](#)

Additional Resources

- [UN Strategic Development Goals](#)

- [City Council Strategic Priorities](#)
- [Social Equity in Resilience Planning](#)
- [Six Principles for Equity and Inclusive Engagement](#)
- [Social Equity in Resilience Planning](#)
- [Video: Adding a New Dimension to Urban Planning](#)
- [Article: The Racist Housing Policy that Made Your Neighborhood](#)
- [Video: Cooked; Survival by Zip Code](#)
 - (see 4:40–14:00, Racial disparities in Chicago's 1995 heat wave)
- [Article: How to Prevent City Climate Action from Becoming "Green Gentrification"](#)

IV. Summary of Workshops and Planning Process

Meeting 1: April 15, 2020, 3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

- Built a common understanding of the purpose and call to action of the Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force.
- Set process ground rules and expectations.
- Shared perspectives on resiliency in the era of COVID-19.

Meeting 2: May 19, 2020, 3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

- Drafted a shared vision for the Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force.
- Introduced and discussed concepts of sustainability and resiliency.
- Shared and collaborated on next steps and community listening sessions.

Meeting 3: June 23, 2020, 3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

- Finalized a vision statement for the Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force.
- Discussed steps to implement community listening sessions and community groups to reach out to.
- Introduced shocks and stressors survey and discussed how these influence content of the plan.

Meeting 4: July 21, 2020, 3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

- Provided feedback on process for task force meetings.
- Revisited outcomes of planning process to date for further feedback.
- Discussed ways in which task force meetings can be run more effectively going forward.

Meeting 5: August 18, 2020, 3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

- Discussed importance of equity in the planning process, and how equity is involved in this plan.
- Shared results of shocks and stressors survey and discussed
- Finalized 5 focus areas and defined next steps.

Meeting 6: September 22, 2020, 3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m. (optional meeting)

- Heard presentation from Dee Sabol and Savita Katarya from the Diversity Council.
- Explored inequity in the context of Rochester.
- Discussed racial and social inequity in relation to public policy.

Meeting 7: October 20, 2020, 3:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.

- Reviewed data from surveys and community listening sessions. Discussed how it was collected, and how data will be used.
- Discussed how to develop strategies that both respond to community needs and align with equity, sustainability, and resiliency frameworks.

Meeting 8: November 17, 2020, 3:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.

- Reviewed process steps and most recent strategy work.
- Continued review of shocks and stressors survey, community listening sessions, and community surveys.
- Used results to build out strategies and tactics.

Meeting 9: December 15, 2020, 3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

- Watched Transition Rochester Earth Day presentation.
- Discussed how this presentation relates to work of Task Force in small groups.

Meeting 10: January 17, 2021, 3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

- Discussed content of plan and ranked them by feasibility and importance.
- Discussed community involvement in implementation of the plan.

Meeting 11: February 16, 2021, 3:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.

- Reviewed and edited draft objective statements for each focus area.
- Reviewed prioritization of strategies based on phased implementation.

Meeting 12: March 16, 2021, 3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

- Finalized focus area objective statements.
- Discussed plan implementation and milestones.
- Discussed accountability strategies.

Meeting 13: April 20, 2021, 3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

- Reviewed and discussed edits for the Summary Plan.
- Shared updates on re-engagement process with community listening groups.

V. Location of Additional Resources

Presentation slides, recordings, and meeting minutes for each task force meeting can be found on Rochester's [Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force web page](#). Additional resources can be found there as well.

Appendix B

I. Equitable Engagement Community Process

EQUITABLE ENGAGEMENT

A Novel Approach to Community Participation

Lauren Jensen, City of Rochester



**WHAT DID
WE SET OUT
TO DO?**



WHAT DID WE SET OUT TO DO?



3 SLIDE

Build Equity Into Community Engagement

Prioritize the involvement of community members who:

- Are most heavily impacted by effort
- Historically are not heard from

Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.

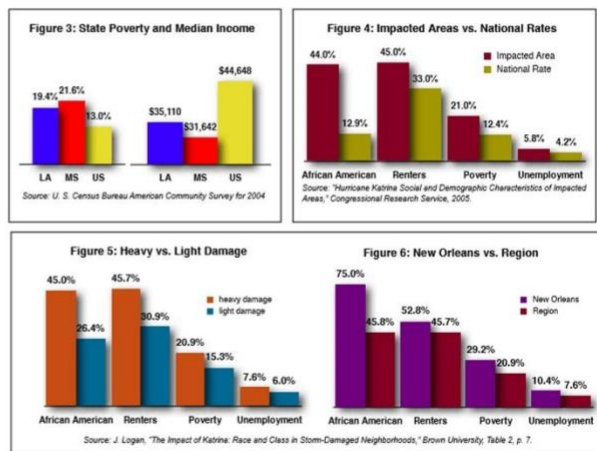
Jane Jacobs

PICTUREQUESTES

Why is this important?

Crisis, planning efforts, programs, projects, etc. disproportionately impact our community. In other words – some have more to gain than others.

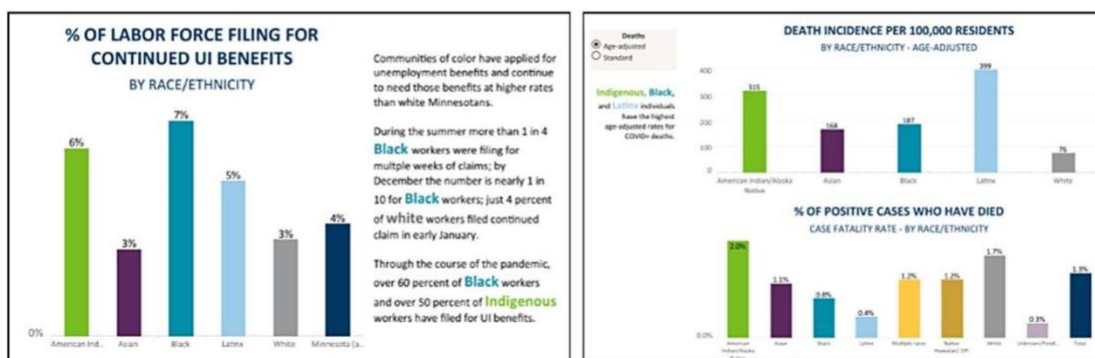
- American Disability Act design standards
- COVID-19 pandemic response programs
- Climate Change Impacts



Impacts of Hurricane Katrina
Source: inequity.standard.edu

Disproportional Impacts of COVID-19 in MN

- Shocks to community are disproportionate



Source: mn.gov

HOW DID WE DO THIS?



Equitable Community Engagement: *Design Process*

7 SLIDE

- Borrowed from examples across the US
- Refined to Rochester by City/Community for Health Steering Committee
- Customizable to project
- Continuous improvement for each new project



| Traditional Engagement Approaches | Equitable Engagement Approaches |
|---|--|
| Community responds to developed efforts (late-stage involvement) | Community partners identify and develop efforts (early-stage involvement) |
| Community expected to volunteer perspectives and lived experience | Community is compensated as partners |
| Prioritizes learned expertise | Prioritizes lived experience |
| Making decisions on behalf of community | Decision-making with community – shared power structure |
| Focus on # of engagements | Focus on depth of engagements |
| Uncover what people think | Uncover what people feel |
| Engage most accessible community members | Engage new collaborators as co-designers to access fresh perspectives within communities |
| Facilitate conversations | Facilitate long-lasting relationships |
| Promote consensus-building first | Promote diversity and debate first |
| Engagement is project-based | Investment in building trust and network-building |
| Project-specific outcomes | Broadly applicable outcomes |
| Process is managed | Process is facilitated |

8 SLIDE

Barriers that equitable engagement attempts to address:

9 SLIDE

Community Barriers:

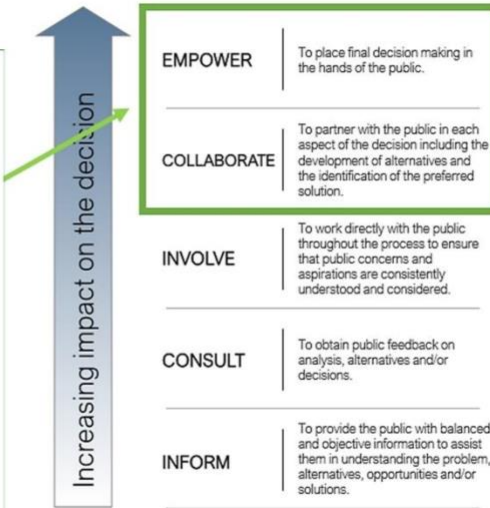
- Power differential and decision-making
- Existing community networks
- Over-value of learned experience
- Lack of lived experience to inform policy, program and project design
- Distrust of government and public processes

Participation Barriers:

- Lost wages
- Language
- Meeting location
- Speak for community/tokenism
- Transportation availability and costs
- Childcare availability and costs
- Time of day

Are you set up for success?

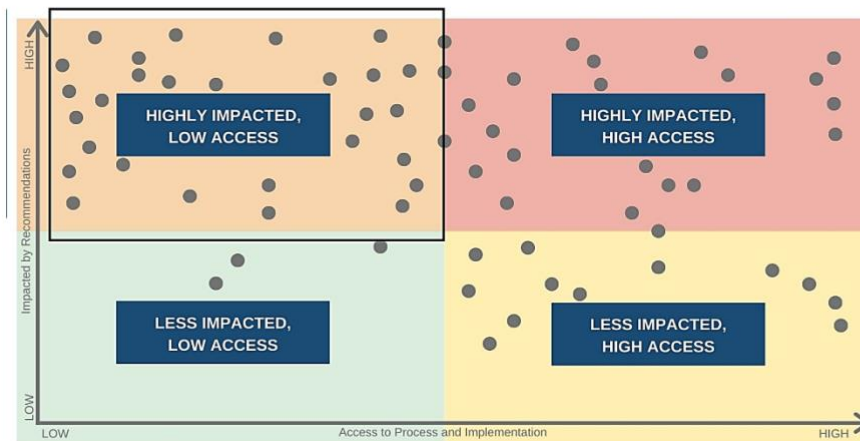
1. Designers / Agency participation
2. Project timeline allows for approach
3. Resources in place for participant compensation and to implement outcomes
4. Underserved will be positively impacted by project, program or policy
5. Participants drive agenda and discussion



Spectrum of Public Participation (International Association for Public Participation)

Stakeholder Power Mapping Analysis

- Who is most impacted by project?
- Who currently has the most influence in the process or implementation?



Source: Groupmap.com, USDN

Project Case Study: Rochester Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force



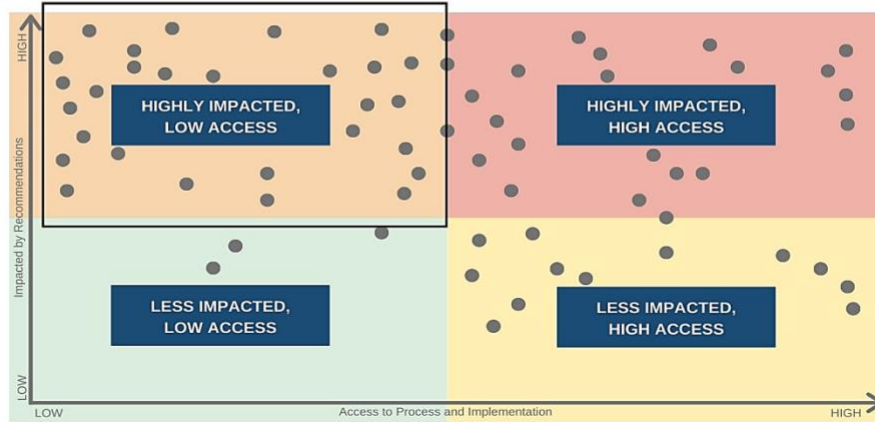
MISSION & PURPOSE

- Develop a Sustainability Plan for the Rochester community
- Guide the Mayor and City to adopt and modify policies, services and practices that help meet the City's social, economic and environmental goals
- Broaden the City's definition of sustainability and resiliency
- Create goals and metrics that shine a light on environmental justice

Stakeholder Power Mapping Analysis

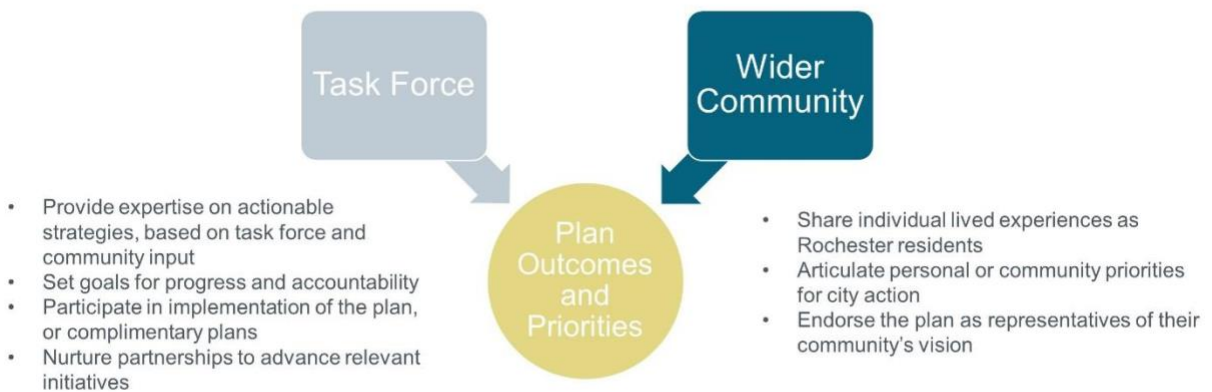
14 SLIDE

- Who is most impacted by project?
 - Who currently has the most influence in the process or implementation?
- ➔
- Task force membership
 - Community listening prioritization



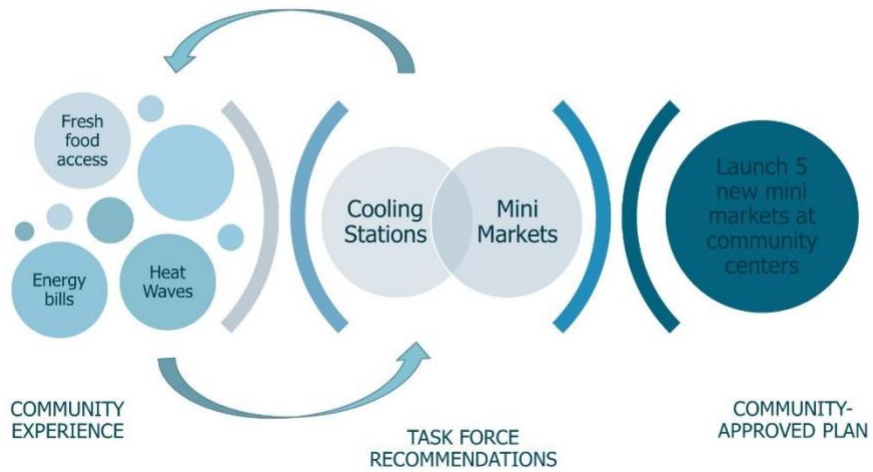
Task Force and Community Roles

15 SLIDE



For example....

16 SLIDE



Developing a Community Listening Plan

17 SLIDE





COMMUNITY LISTENING QUESTIONS

- How would you define community? How do you interact with the community?
- What would help you connect/feel connected with your neighbors or community as a whole?
- What would make Rochester a great place to live for future generations?
- What is one thing that would support you, your family, or your community's ability to thrive?
- The plan will focus on the following areas, what is important to you of these areas and what is missing?



NEEDS AND KEY THEMES

- Affordable housing & living wages
- Community resources
 - Community resource center
 - Better communication/translation
 - How/where to access
- Better education system
- Small business & entrepreneurial support
- Accessible transportation; routes, times, cost
- Cultural activities and community events
- Sustainable infrastructure, green jobs, climate change education/engagement, green space
- Diversity in representation – businesses, local government, boards & commissions, etc.
- Job diversity, job assistance, workforce development
- Equity
 - Addressing racial & economic disparities
 - Building a culture around equity & inclusivity
 - Equal opportunity
 - Trusting & welcoming community

WHAT IS GAINED?



1. Deeper level of engagement with communities

- Cannot be replicated in an open house
- Cannot be done by a government employee or professional
- Representatives must be trusted by community
- Effective and efficient form of engagement
- Accountability and trust build into process

22 SLIDE

Outcome: More inclusive and equitable projects, plans and programs that are reflective of Rochester community

2. Community cultural, diversity & inclusivity competency

- Public process engagement and understanding
- Investment in community – relationships last beyond project
- Learnings live beyond project and have broad relevance
- Builds empathy and understanding
- Community desires this approach and will seek it with future public projects/efforts

3. Unique project insights

- Lived experience cannot be accessed without directly engaging those living it
- Engaging under-represented perspectives can offer new and creative design guidance



II. Community Listening Data

The Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force conducted 37 open community listening sessions, attended existing community group meetings, and collected results of a survey sent through Task Force members and posted on the City website to capture as many voices in the community as possible. In particular, the task force highlighted the need to form stronger connections with marginalized groups often underrepresented in community engagement processes. City staff and task force members connected with the following groups during these community listening sessions:

- Cambodian community
- Hmong community
- Sudanese community
- LatinX/Hispanic community
- BIPOC communities
- Indian community
- Chinese American community
- Somali community
- Senior community
- Young adults & high school students
- Low-income populations
- Various neighborhood groups
- Mayo Clinic
- Rochester Public Schools
- Family Service Rochester
- The Elder Network
- Diversity Council
- Rochester Area Builders
- Families First of Minnesota
- Workforce Development, Inc.
- Rochester Community Initiative
- University of Minnesota Rochester
- Indian Cultural Association of Minnesota
- Olmsted County Environmental Commission
- Rochester Olmsted Youth Commission
- Zumbro Valley Health Center
- Interfaith Hospitality Network
- Compassion Rochester MN
- Southeastern Minnesota Interfaith Immigrant Legal Defense
- The Village Agricultural Cooperative & Learning Community
- Youth sports organizations
- Rochester Area Foundation
- Rochester Community and Technical College

The task force organized these opportunities to ensure the plan reflects the needs and desires of the community and to build relationships with residents of the city.

Community members from a wide variety of backgrounds took the opportunity to provide input, resulting in 40 community groups participating and 173 survey responses. The survey included the following short answer questions:

1. How would you define community? How do you interact with the community?
2. What would help you connect/feel connected with your neighbors or community as a whole?
3. What would make Rochester a great place to live for future generations?
4. What is one thing that would support you, your family, or your community's ability to thrive?
5. The plan will focus on the following areas, what is important to you of these areas and what is missing?

Community Listening Sessions

From the community listening sessions, several themes stuck out as critical needs for most community members and groups. For example, 35 individuals identified a culture of equity and inclusion as a necessity for them to feel supported and well in the community. The pie chart below (Figure 1) includes the major needs established by six or more individuals in the community listening sessions. The number inside of each piece of the chart indicates how many individuals specifically identified the topic as a need in the community. The "other" slice of the pie chart represents needs identified by five or fewer individuals, which were considered secondary needs and are broken down in Figure 2.

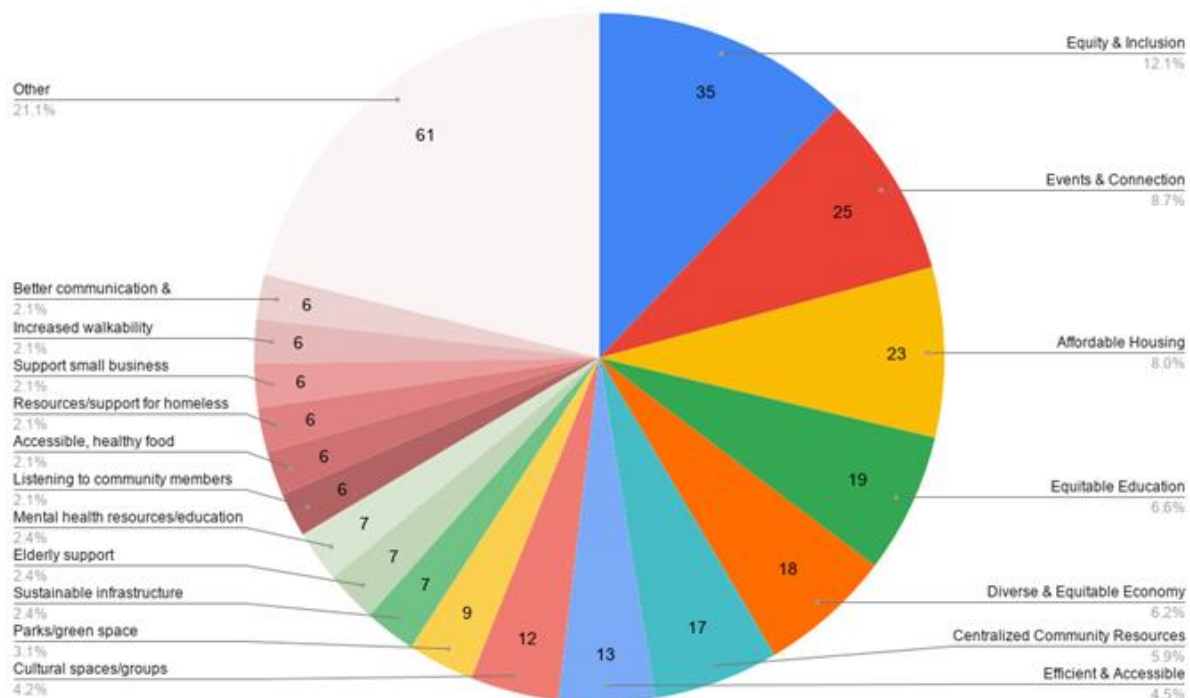


Figure 1: Critical needs identified through community listening sessions.

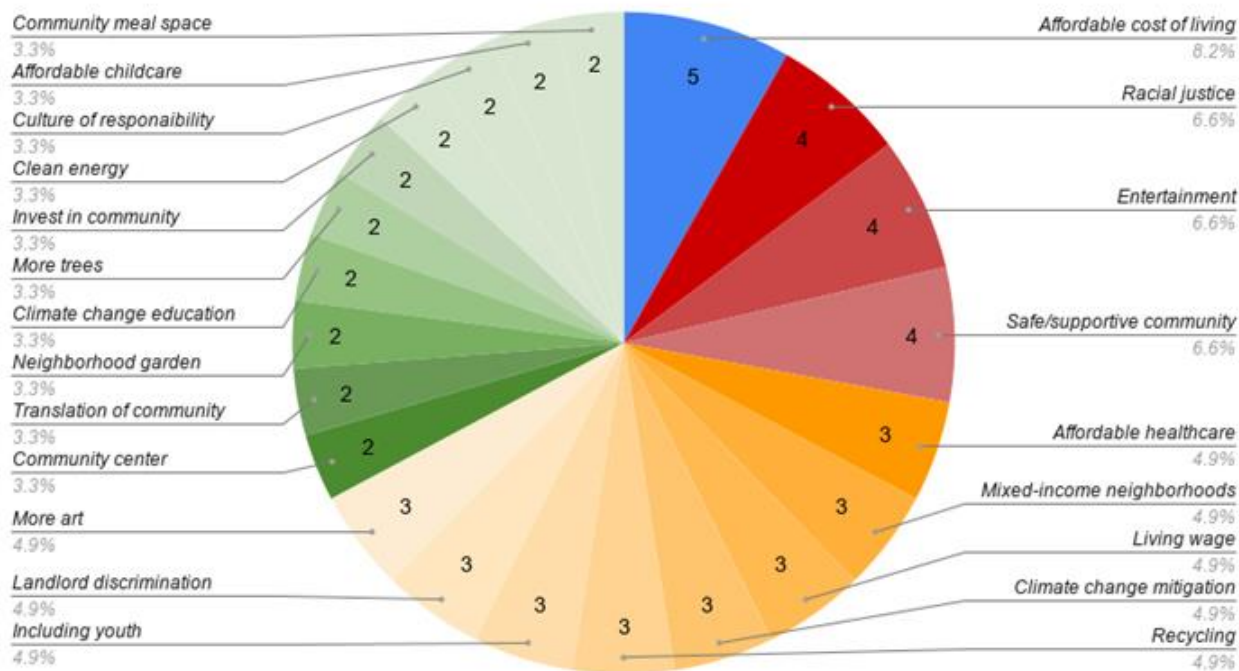


Figure 2: Secondary needs identified through community listening sessions.

Community Survey Responses

As with the community listening sessions, several themes stuck out as critical needs to many of the survey respondents. For example, Events and Community Gatherings had 77 individuals identifying this as a necessity for them to feel supported and well in the community. Figure 3 includes these major needs established by six or more individuals on the community survey. The number inside of each piece of the chart indicates how many individuals specifically identified the topic as a need in the community. The “other” slice of the pie chart represents needs identified by five or fewer individuals, which were considered secondary needs and are broken down in Figure 4.

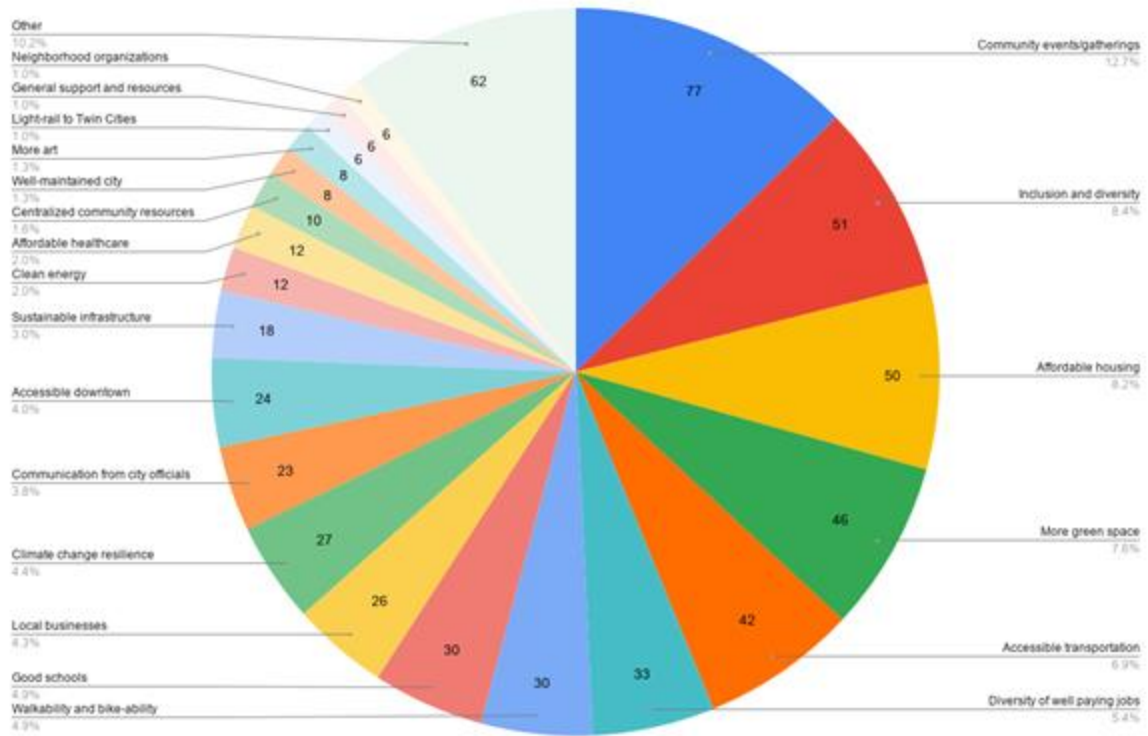


Figure 3: Critical needs identified through survey responses.

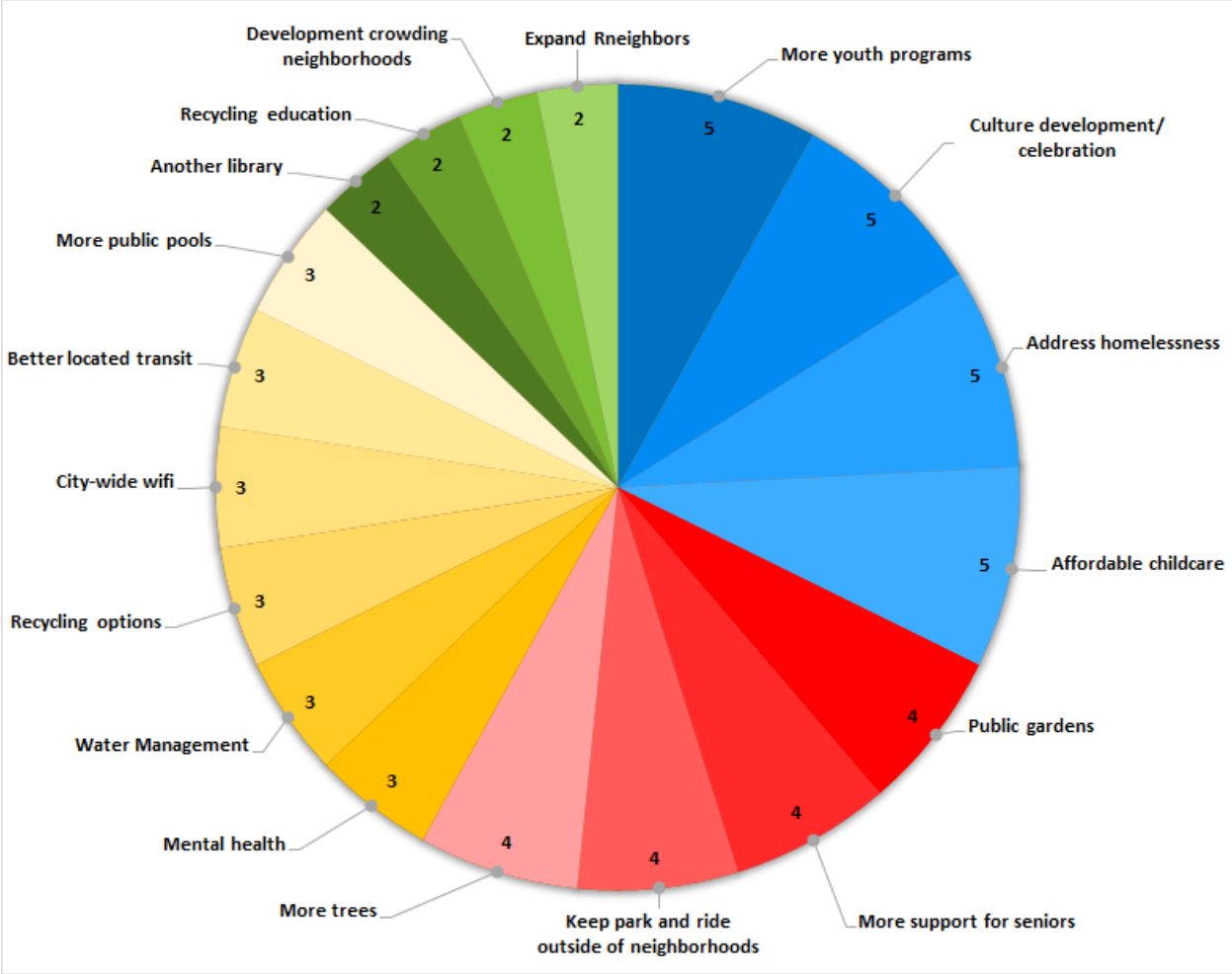


Figure 4: Secondary needs identified through survey responses.

Appendix C

I. Resources on Equitable Planning

In September 2020, City of Rochester Diversity Council employees Dee Sabol and Savita Katarya gave a presentation to the Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force on inequity in the context of Rochester. The goal of the presentation was for task force members to have a better understanding of social policy and wealth inequality, understand inequity in the context of Rochester, and understand how this knowledge can be applied going forward. Task Force members learned that there are significant wealth and employment disparities among white and BIPOC residents of Rochester due to discriminatory policies, such as redlining, that have made it easier for white individuals to accumulate wealth. This wealth inequality, unfortunately, was growing even before the COVID-19 pandemic. After learning about the existing racial and social inequalities in Rochester, participants in this meeting discussed ways to reduce wealth disparities with strategies that support affordable housing, childcare, and access to resources.

To see the entire presentation, click [here](#). For a recording of the presentation, click [here](#) and use this passcode: n2fa\$nJF.