



WEST MAIN MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION + PLACEMAKING PLAN

A Review of Existing Conditions
JUNE 2021



Photo of "Coach Rob," who travels down West Main by bike every day.



Trying to cross the street to Family Dollar after getting off the bus.



The bus heading to Downtown.



What should West Main look like?

How should it feel?

How should people be able to get around West Main?

What support do existing local businesses need?

What new businesses or services does the community need?

What kinds of policies will help generate wealth for existing community members?

How and where can public art be used to express the spirit of the community?

What are the community's priorities? How can we bring them to life?

Together with community partners, the City of Rochester and the Genesee Transportation Council have initiated a project to help answer these questions. Building on Citywide efforts to promote prosperity, sustainability, and justice, the West Main Street Multimodal Transportation + Placemaking Study will establish an actionable vision for West Main.

Mural by Shawn Dunwoody on Clark Alley, just off West Main.

CONTEXT AND INTRODUCTION

West Main Street is many things to many people. To some, West Main is simply a street they take the bus or drive on. To others it is a hub of social and economic activity and the place where multiple neighborhoods meet. Steeped in history, the street is home to a range of cultural institutions, artistic expressions, and reminders of social justice movements both old and new.

West Main is also a place where legacies of injustice persist; reaching back to its earliest days, the land that West Main sits on was forcefully and violently taken from the indigenous Seneca people by white colonists. In the centuries between then and now, both covertly and overtly discriminatory policies and practices have contributed to concentration of poverty, higher rates of chronic illness, perceptions of high crime rates, and disinvestment in the built environment.

As part of the conversation about building a more just and vibrant West Main, it is important to recognize that these issues are part of a collective, interrelated whole: Land use and transportation policies are directly tied to the community’s health, wealth, and safety. Community ownership and dedicated resources to maintain public space investments in the long term are essential to build and sustain community pride and capacity. Protective and restorative policies and programs are critical to ensure newly created wealth and other benefits flow to existing residents and business.

ON STOLEN LAND

Rochester, including West Main Street, sits on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Seneca. In the Seneca language they are known as O-non-dowa-gah, (pronounced: Oh-n’own-dough-wahgah) or “Great Hill People.” Together the Seneca, with the Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Tuscarora, make up the sovereign Haudenosaunee Nations (also known as the Iroquois Confederacy). The Canandaigua Treaty of 1794 – one of the earliest treaties between a Native nation and the US – affirmed the land rights of the Haudenosaunee Nations. Though portions of the Treaty have been upheld, most Articles have been largely ignored by the US.

Through this project, all facets of West Main – the built environment, economic activity, and social structures – will be explored together. And while no single project can fully respond to every challenge or grasp every opportunity, this effort will offer a clear starting point for the community and City to help guide near- and long-term actions and investments on West Main.

Finally, this process is taking place during one of the most disruptive and challenging periods in recent history. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will not soon go away or be forgotten, and while this project will address many long-standing challenges of West Main, the acute impacts of this global health crisis are an important piece of context to consider.

Related Plans and Initiatives

There are several related initiatives and planned projects that are important context for this project. Each is described briefly below with links for additional information provided. Notably, many of these initiatives included various types of community outreach processes that helped establish goals and recommendations, some of which are directly related to West Main Street.

Rochester 2034 is a citywide comprehensive plan that outlines goals and actions related to housing, job creation, transportation, health, arts and culture, sustainability, and more. Learn more at: www.rochester2034.com/.

Key takeaways for West Main:

- West Main is identified as a Neighborhood Activity Street - a key commercial corridor that supports economic productivity and multimodal travel.
- Two bus transfer hubs - one at each end of the study area - are recommended. The hubs should include amenities like shelters, transit system displays, bike parking, and fare vending.

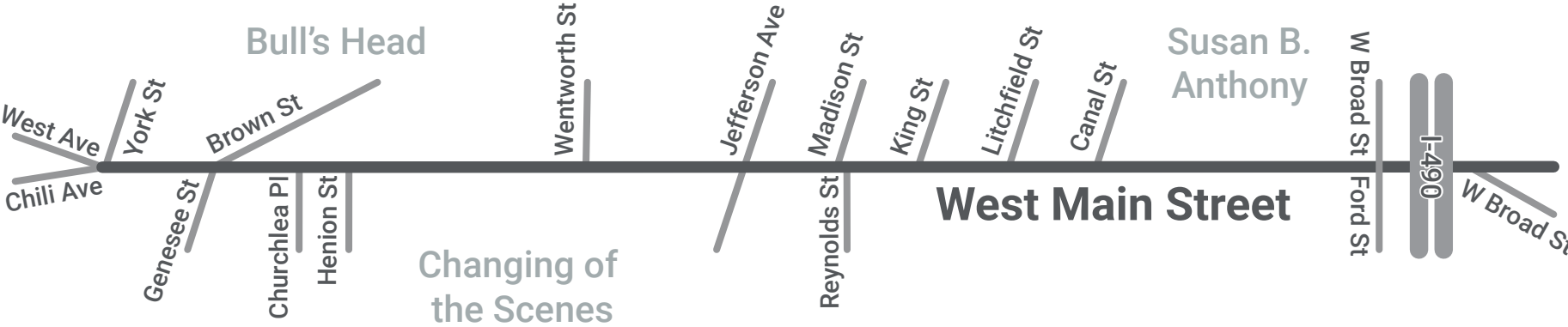
- The desired land use along West Main is defined as Neighborhood Mixed-Use, meaning it should provide space for a diversity of local businesses on the ground floor with residential units above. The surrounding neighborhoods are identified as Medium Density Residential, which promotes homes ranging from single-family to four-family houses.

Completed in 2019 and implemented in May 2021, **Reimagine RTS** is a full network redesign of Monroe County’s public transit system. The plan includes changes to bus routes and service frequency to help provide people with convenient, connected, and cost-competitive transit. Learn more at: reimagine.myrts.com/.

Key takeaways for West Main:

- The Reimagine RTS plan was implemented on May 17, 2021. Now, West Main carries three bus routes, two of which are in the Frequent Service tier.
- Buses on Frequent Service routes comes every 15 minutes between 6:00AM and 6:00PM and every 30 minutes during other service hours. Buses on Local Service routes comes every 30 minutes between 6:00AM and 6:00PM and every hour during other service hours.

Figure 1. Project Area



The **Bull's Head Revitalization Plan** is focused on promoting reinvestment and economic growth in the area around the intersection of West Main Street, Brown Street, and Genesee Street. It includes a range of recommended policies and projects to spur remediation and economic development on the areas vacant, contaminated, and City-owned parcels. Learn more at: cityofrochester.gov/BullsHeadRevitalization/.

Key takeaways for West Main:

- Several of the contaminated sites identified within the Bull's Head Revitalization Plan are situated along West Main, representing a need for environmental remediation and a vehicle for potential economic development.
- A cluster of city-owned parcels on the west side of the study area (on West Main at Genesee St and Brown St) have been assembled for redevelopment by a private developer as part of the Bull's Head Revitalization Plan. Development proposals are under review by the City as of Spring 2021.

The **Rochester Comprehensive Access and Mobility Plan (CAMP)** outlines a long-term approach to establish safe, connected, and reliable networks for people who walk, bike, take transit, or drive. Learn more at: cityofrochester.gov/camp/.

Key takeaways for West Main:

- The plan recommends improving walkability on streets like West Main by adopting new methods of snow removal, designing streets that reduce vehicle speeds, using the 'edge-friction' of on-street parking to calm traffic, and installing more mid-block crosswalks.

- The plan calls for support of high-quality transit on streets like West Main through design features that reduce transit travel times and encouraging transit-supportive residential and commercial development.

The **Rochester Commercial Corridor Study** was completed in 2019 and focuses on identifying market-driven approaches to energizing many of Rochester's commercial corridors, including West Main. Learn more at: cityofrochester.gov/CommercialCorridorStudy/.

Key takeaways for West Main:

- Based on the existing market conditions and sales activity, the study recommends a range of interventions including a streetscape project, creating artist live/work spaces, providing options for public parking toward the east end of the study area, assigning a district coordinator to the area, and more.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Throughout this document, feedback from the community will be shared in boxes like this one. So far residents, organizations, and stakeholders have helped revise project goals and provide important project context through:

- 5 Steering Committee meetings
- 4 One-on-one stakeholder interviews
- 5 Pop-up events
- 3 Community surveys
- Informal conversations with people on West Main

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE

The people, organizations, and businesses on West Main and in the bordering neighborhoods are what give the street a pulse. Today, West Main is home to a range of locally-owned and -operated businesses, social service providers, community and faith organizations, and cultural institutions. The street is also the center of social and economic activity for the multiple residential neighborhoods in Rochester's southwest quadrant that converge at West Main. There is a lot to celebrate on West Main and a foundation for strong community ties and economic activity to be strengthened in the future.

In many ways, however, West Main and the surrounding neighborhoods show the signs of a community with stretched incomes and a legacy of harm caused by discriminatory policies and practices. People living around West Main have lower household incomes than the City of Rochester as a whole, suffer from higher rates of chronic disease, and are more likely to be underemployed. Local businesses compete for resources and customers with large corporations just outside the study area. As a predominately Black neighborhood, people carry the weight of living in a society that struggles to reconcile its aspirations for equity with entrenched structural racism. These challenges are significant, but they are not unique to West Main or to the City of Rochester. Understanding and naming West Main's resiliency – as well as the challenges the area faces – are critical steps to charting a course of action for the future.



Photo credit: Dawn Noto

The Social History of West Main

The social and economic fabric of West Main has changed significantly over time. Originally inhabited by the native O-non-dowa-gah (or Seneca) people, the land around Rochester including West Main was violently taken for development by white colonists in the 1700s. Throughout the 1800s, Rochester and West Main grew dramatically. Rochester was incorporated as a City in 1834, home to a rapidly growing population and economic industry fueled by the completion of the Erie Canal and railroads. With economic activity in Rochester concentrated around the Genesee River and Downtown, West Main was a natural extension for this growth. As commercial and industrial uses spread along the corridor, residential communities formed to the north and south of West Main.

West Main's story as a center for social justice movements reaches back as far as the street itself. In the early 1800s, prominent figures in the abolitionist and suffragist movements planted roots on and around West Main. After living for 22 years in enslavement in Virginia and New York, Austin Steward escaped to freedom and overcame violent opposition to open a market on West Main in 1817. His market is the first known Black-owned business in the City. A passionate reader and writer, Steward went on to publish his influential autobiography, Twenty-two Years a Slave and Forty Years a Freeman, in 1857. Other prominent Black businesspeople later opened businesses in the area, including the City's first licensed Black doctor, Dr. Charles T. Lunsford, and the City's first licensed Black dentist, Dr. Van Tuly Levy.

In the 1830s, Rochester became a connection point along the Underground Railroad, a secretive network of people and places working to help enslaved Americans find freedom. Numerous sites

around and possibly on West Main emerged as safe havens for people risking their lives to escape slavery. Regarded as one of the most important figures in the movement to end slavery, Frederick Douglass made a home in Rochester in 1847, where he lived and worked for 25 years. Douglass impacted both the abolitionist and suffragist movements through social-organizing, lectures, and publications in the North Star, a weekly anti-slavery newspaper which he published from the Talman Building on East Main Street.

In 1866, the Anthony family moved to a house on Madison Street, just off West Main. A family of activists, members of the Anthony family including Susan and Mary Anthony organized out of their home near West Main to fight for women's right to vote. Susan B. Anthony helped organize a group of women to vote illegally in the 1872 election at a polling place on West Main where Voter's Block Apartments stands today. Susan B. Anthony became president of the National American Women's Suffrage Association in the 1890s, which was headquartered out of the house on Madison Street. Though Susan and Mary did not live to see the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, the right for women to vote across the country is often celebrated as a victory born out of organizing that took place near West Main.

Beginning in the early 1900s, large numbers of Black Americans moved to Rochester and other urban areas in the Northeast, Midwest, and West to escape the legally-enforced segregation and violence that was prominent in the south. The population of Black residents in Rochester grew from under 8,000 to over 40,000 between the 1940s and 1960s. This period is known today as the Great Migration. Despite the City's legacy of organizing for human rights, Black people who moved to Rochester were met with unequal access to housing, education, and jobs. The effects of policies and

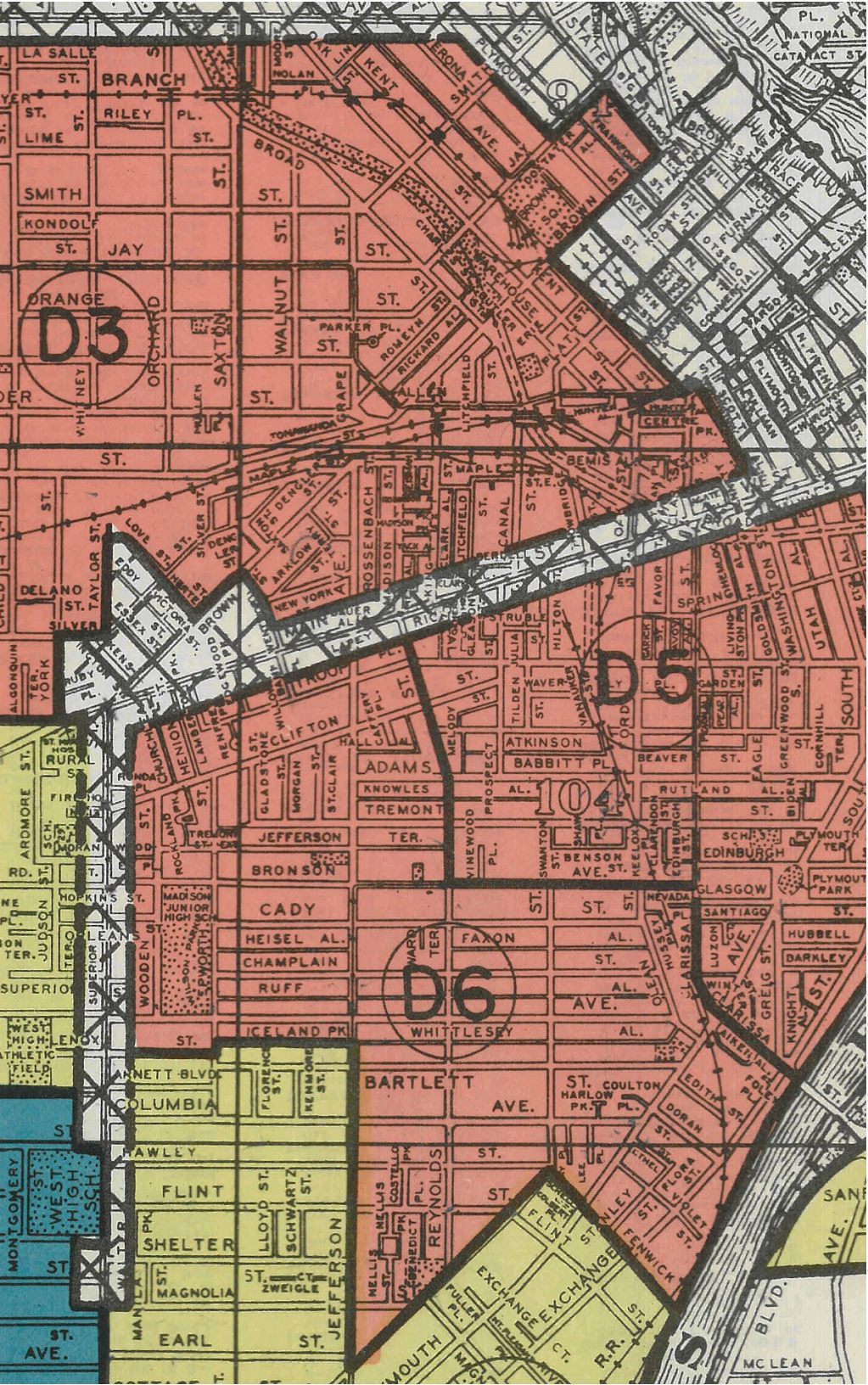
Right: 1939 Redlining Map

practices that governed this pivotal time in Rochester's history are directly visible today in the segregation and concentration of poverty that persists around West Main.

Among the most influential of these policies was the systemic denial of home ownership opportunities for Black residents, known as "redlining." In the 1930s, the federal government's Home Owner's Loan Corporation assigned a color-coded rating of credit-worthiness to neighborhoods in cities across the United States. Government assessors used an overtly racist methodology to determine what made a neighborhood worthy of credit; neighborhoods where Black and immigrant families lived received the lowest grades. These neighborhoods were classified as "hazardous" and shown in red on maps used by financial institutions to deny mortgages to people in these "redlined" areas. Rochester's neighborhoods were assessed and color-coded in 1939 and three of the four areas that touch the study area were classified as 'Hazardous.' One area at the far west end of the study area was categorized as "Definitely Declining."

"Years ago this was a section of beautiful old homes. Some still remain – massive structures and still handsome but with no value except for conversion purposes. Negroes have come into the area and today it is the poorest section of the entire city. The most that can be said for it is that it is convenient."

- Excerpt from 1939 Home Owner's Loan Corporation description of the southeastern portion of the study area, which was designated as 'Hazardous.'





With access to capital severely restricted as a result of redlining and other predatory practices within the housing industry, conditions on and around West Main declined. Existing houses couldn't be maintained, new houses couldn't be built, and families lost out on the opportunity to grow intergenerational wealth through homeownership. Redlining also codified racist attitudes by giving white homeowners a financial incentive to resist in-migration by Black residents. As a result, there were few places where Black people could live once they relocated to Rochester during the Great Migration. A small handful of neighborhoods – most of them directly adjacent to or near West Main – became home to the vast majority of the City's Black population in overcrowded, under-resourced households. The concentration of Black and politically marginalized residents in the areas around West Main paved the way for future harms, including the removal of neighborhoods for highways and other projects during the era of urban renewal in the 1960s and 1970s.

In 2020, Rochester residents recalled their roots as a birthplace for social justice advocacy. Alongside movements around the globe, Rochesterians organized to protest the unjust treatment of Black and other marginalized people, and specifically the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and most locally, Daniel Prude. Some likened the summer of 2020 to the summer of 1964, when Rochester made national news for "race riots" centered on Clarissa Street, just south of the project area. These histories – the celebrated, the unjust, and the still-unfolding – are all a part of what has shaped social and economic conditions on West Main today.

Left: Statue of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass, titled "Let's Have Tea," by Pepsy Kettavong in Madison Park near West Main. Photo credit: Richard Margolis

West Main's Neighbors

Today, West Main is the central commercial corridor that serves residential neighborhoods that surround it. Around 8,000 people live within a five-minute walk of the study area. However, density around West Main is not evenly distributed. The areas further to the southeast and southwest of the study area are much more densely settled than the areas directly north and south of West Main.

From active and engaged neighborhood associations to faith leaders to mission-driven organizations, West Main is home to people who have invested time and care into their community.

- In the house where the Anthony family organized for the right to vote, the Susan B. Anthony House and Museum stands today. Located just off West Main, the museum was established in 1945 and was an all-volunteer organization until 1992. Today the museum offers voting and human rights programming.
- Founded in the 1990s, the MOCHA (Men of Color Health Awareness) Center opened a location on West Main in 2020. Through their work, the community has access to free and confidential health services, many of which are suited specifically to the unique needs of the LGBTQ community.
- WALL\THERAPY – an art-based community intervention project – has brought inspiration through murals to walls across Rochester, including four visible on West Main and three more in the immediately surrounding area.
- Located at the northeast corner of the study area, a permanent homeless encampment called Peace Village was established in 2018 by a group of several local organizations. A few blocks to the west, Partners Ending Homelessness is located on West

Main and helps coordinate housing and care services for people experiencing homelessness.

- Though they no longer have a physical storefront on the street, 540WMain was established in 2016 by community members who are passionate about community-based education and social justice. The organization is now fully virtual but maintains strong roots to the street for which they are named. Educational resources are made available to the community for whatever price people feel they can afford.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

People were asked to share what places or people make them feel connected to West Main. Responses were wide-ranging and include:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| • 540 W Main | • Somali African Restaurant |
| • 1872 Café | • Plaza at the intersection of Genesee/West Main |
| • Andy's Southern Deli | • Regular people |
| • Art supply store | • Rochester Housing Authority |
| • Bus Stops | • Saints Peters and Paul Food Kitchen |
| • Convenience stores | • Sew Green |
| • Family Dollar | • The small businesses |
| • Fish markets | • Walgreens |
| • Floral Boutique | |
| • MOCHA Center | |
| • Nick Tahou | |

Around 75% of residents around the study area are Black, compared to 40% citywide.

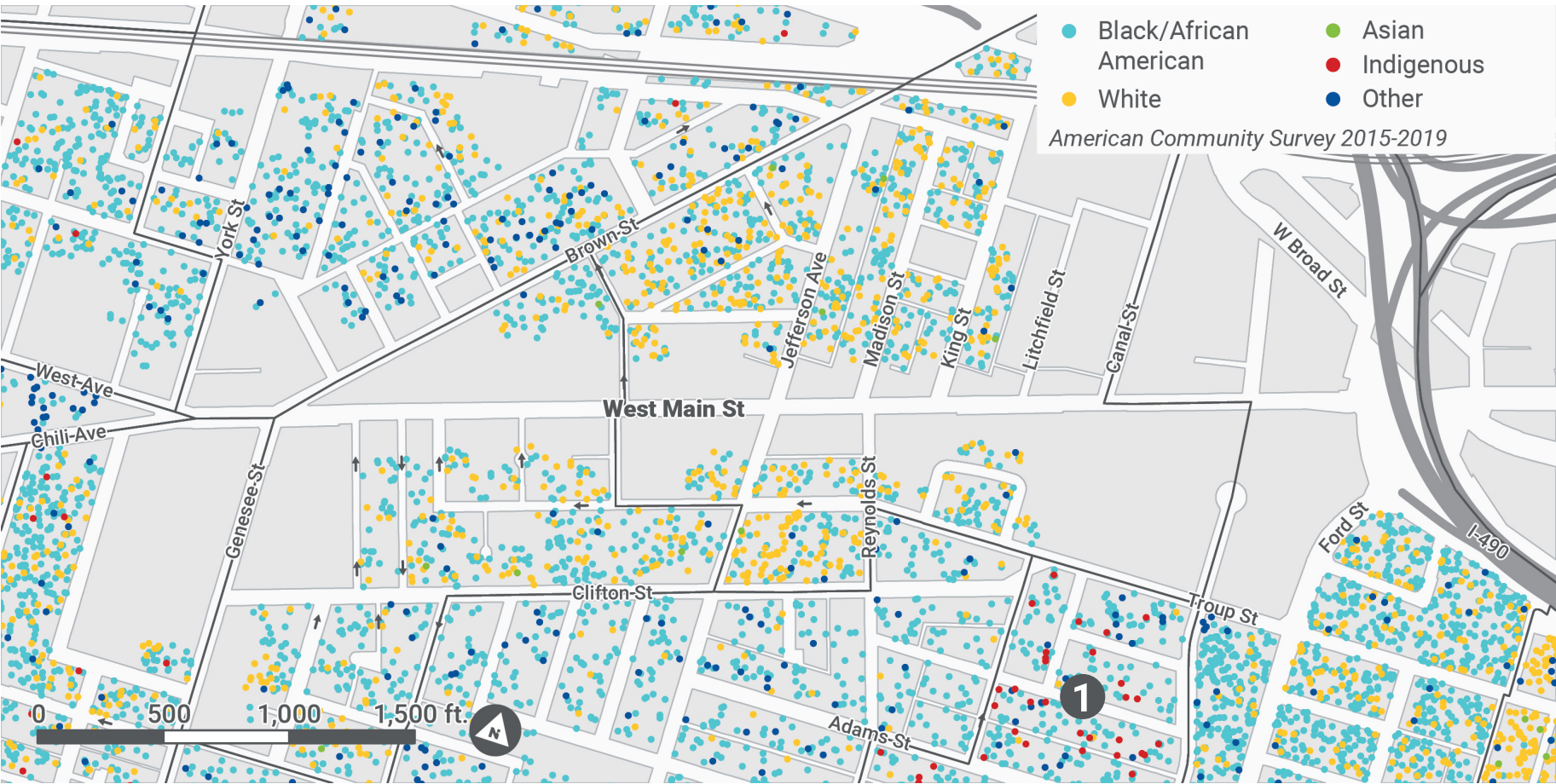
- At 17% of the area population, white people are the second most prominent racial group. Three percent of the area population is mixed race.
- One percent of the area population is Indigenous, most of whom are concentrated to the southeast of West Main. ❶

- The vast majority of households within the study area – 97% – speak English at home.

Compared to Rochester as a whole, more children under 18 live in the area around West Main.

- While most other age groups are relatively consistent with Citywide statistics, children under 18 make up a larger percentage of the overall population than they do throughout the rest of Rochester.

Figure 2. Racial Identity Distribution by Census Block Group (1 dot = 1 person)



Around 65% of households around West Main have annual incomes below the citywide median of \$35,000.

- Nearly half of the households around West Main get by on less than \$20,000 per year.

As of 2010, 75% of housing units around West Main were occupied by renters.

- While only 8% of households which owned their homes didn't have access to a car, almost 48% of households which rented their homes lived without access to a car.
- There was some racial disparity between homeowners and renters around West Main; compared to Black households, a slightly higher percentage of white households own their home

either outright (paid in full) or with a mortgage. The results from the 2020 census will shed light on how this disparity has increased or decreased over the last decade in response to social and economic trends that intersect with housing.

Figure 4. Home Ownership Status by Race

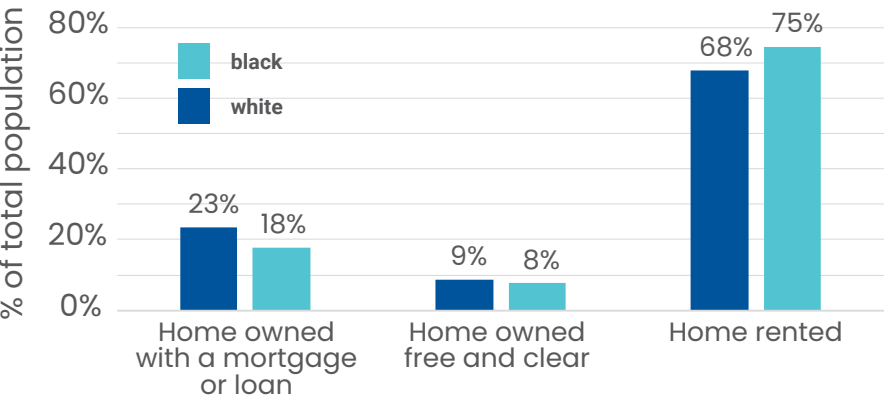
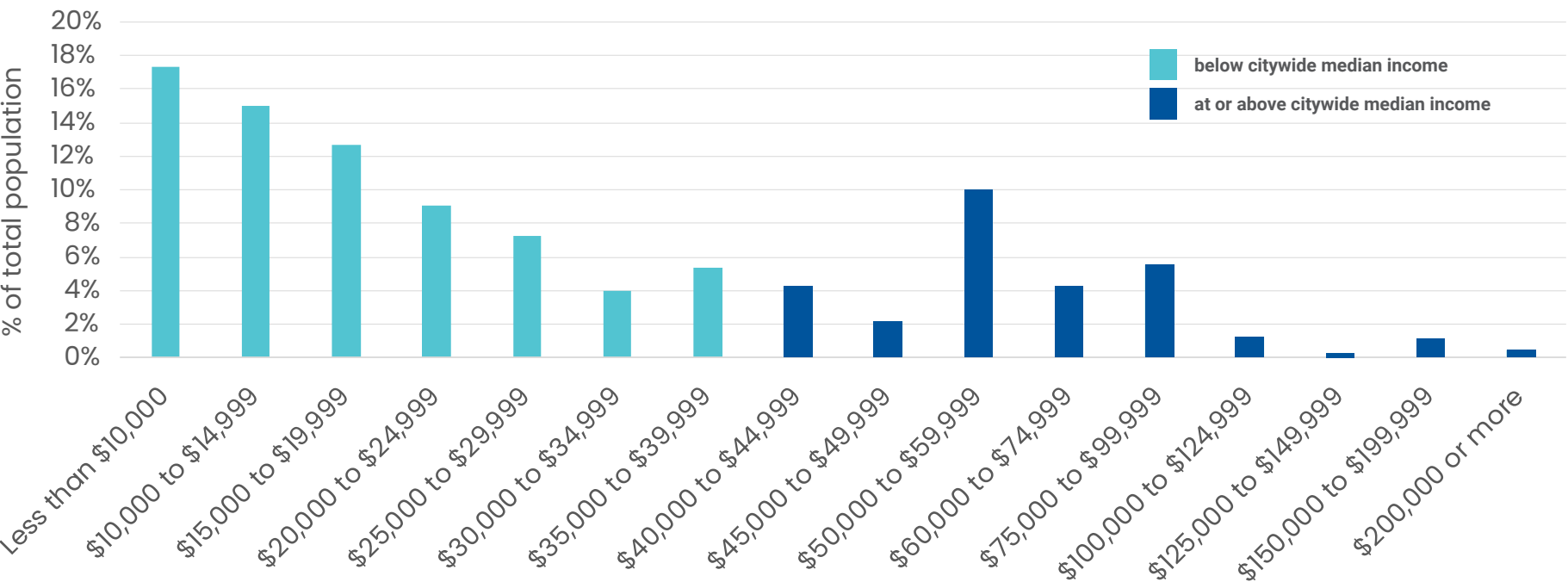


Figure 3. Household Income Distribution Around West Main



Home purchases have been slow to rebound around West Main and throughout the Southwest Quadrant of the City since the crash of 2008.

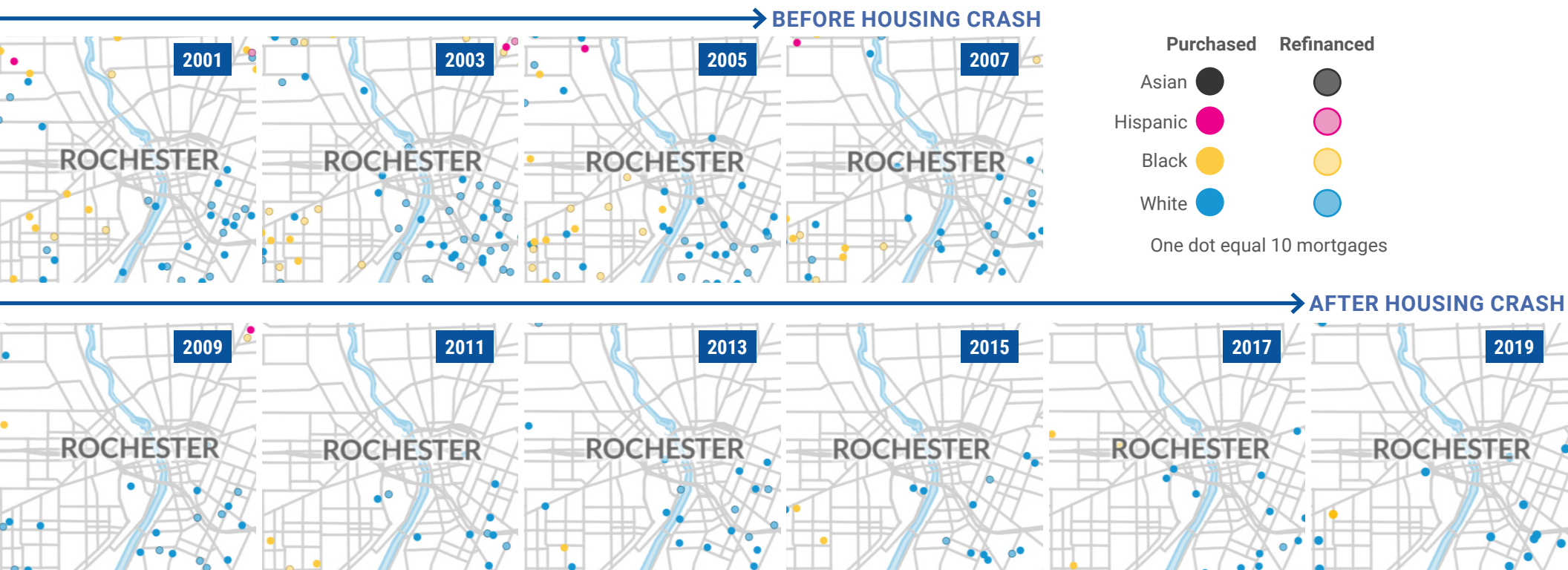
- In the years leading up to the housing crash of 2008, both Black and white families were purchasing homes in the immediate vicinity around West Main. Since the crash, however, few home purchases have been made by Black families, while purchases by white families have slowly returned.
- Vacant housing in the area makes up a sizable percentage (around 17%) of the full housing supply. Around half of the vacant housing units in the area are not being actively marketed for lease or sale.

- Home values in the area around West Main are generally lower than the in City overall.

Analysis completed by Common Ground Health showed that people who live around West Main suffer from chronic diseases at higher rates than those in other City neighborhoods.

- Compared to the average rate among all Rochester residents, West Main Street corridor residents are 38% more likely to be diagnosed with high blood pressure, 45% more likely to have chronic heart disease, and 60% more likely to suffer a stroke.
- Between 9% and 24% of area residents don't have health insurance.

Figure 5. Home purchase and refinance activity, 2001 to 2019. Source: Urban Institute analysis of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data



Local Businesses and Economic Outlook

A citywide market study completed in 2018 evaluated economic trends and indicators across the City, with the area around West Main as a key focus area. Today, West Main has been identified by the Rochester Economic Development Corporation (REDCO) as one of eight priority streets in the City for comprehensive, targeted investment to help grow economic opportunity.

Commercial uses on West Main are primarily small local businesses with a few larger anchor institutions.

- Within the study area, there are over 70 businesses, the vast majority of which are small businesses owned and operated by women and people of color.
- The most common commercial use on the street today is retail shops (31% of businesses). Other common commercial uses include hair salons and barber shops (15%), small grocery and food stores (12%), and bars and restaurants (12%). Community Uses, which make up 7% of commercial uses on the street, include destinations like Churches and health centers.
- Anchor institutions – including Rochester Regional Health and the Susan B. Anthony House and Museum – draw people to West Main for distinct purposes. The presence of a large health institution supports a handful of smaller health-based businesses, while the Susan B. Anthony House and Museum creates a tourist attraction and identity for the eastern position of the study area. Though the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically influenced tourism across the world, the museum has explored potential expansions in the recent past.

- There are technically two business associations that cover the study area, though neither is currently active in strategic planning for West Main.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- **Filling commercial storefronts on West Main is a priority.**
- **People who use West Main would like to see more places to eat, including cafes and fast food establishments.**
- **An affordable grocery store on West Main would improve access to healthy food in the surrounding neighborhoods.**
- **Businesses that help people meet day-to-day needs like pharmacies, childcare providers, hardware stores, tailors, bike shops, and others would be desirable on West Main.**
- **There are some unique retail shops on West Main that are beloved by the community, and people would like to see growth in retail on the street in general.**
- **West Main needs more jobs, through both growth of existing small businesses and by welcoming new employers to the area.**
- **Businesses on West Main should both meet the needs of the neighborhood and invite visitors from outside the immediate area.**
- **People connect with the history of West Main and want to promote it. People have suggested a Visitor's Learning Center, encouraging field trips from local schools, and incentivizing more cultural institutions to locate in the area.**

As a primary route to Downtown and a neighborhood hub for commercial activity, West Main is home to businesses that cater to both neighborhood needs and people from a bit further away.

- About 8,000 people live within a 5-minute walk of West Main, but the street attracts and has the potential to attract customers from a larger area that extends about ¾ mile to the south and west of the study area. Within this area (sometimes called a ‘trade area’), there are around 17,000 residents who share similar income, race, and other demographic characteristics to those living on and directly around West Main.
- Data suggest that around 4% of people in the trade area are unbanked or underbanked, primarily relying on cash. Though people who rely on cash make everyday purchases like those who use credit and debit cards, unbanked people face a number of challenges including reduced access to services, credit, and long-term savings. A Chase Bank, located in Bull’s Head Plaza, is the only brick-and-mortar bank branch located in southwest Rochester.



- The railroad tracks to the north and highway structure to the east limit the extents of the trade area in these directions by creating both physical and perceived barriers to visiting West Main regularly.
- West Main also carries regional traffic on buses and by car in and out of the City each day. While the pandemic has led to changes in travel behaviors – some of which are likely to persist into the future – West Main’s location so close to Downtown gives the street a competitive edge that can be used to build a larger customer base.
- Visitors who drive to businesses on West Main use a mix of private off-street parking lots (usually designated for use by a single business or plaza) and a limited supply of public on-street parking. The importance of available and visible parking options has been noted by business and community members, specifically for capturing business from people who drive commute or pass through West Main.

Pre-pandemic spending trends suggest that some business types on West Main bring in more customers from outside the area than others.

- The specialty food stores on West Main represent a distinct strength of the street. These meat, fish, and ethnic-specialty retailers draw in a large share of customers from within and outside of the trade area. The success of these stores suggest that other specialty food stores may be strong candidates for growth on the street.
- On the other end of the spectrum, West Main loses a significant share of the area’s retail and dining spending to other locations, including big box stores in suburbs to the west of the City. It is estimated that the street only captures around 17% of area spending on retail and dining.
- There are a mix of small grocery and convenience stores on West Main, however the nearest full-service grocery stores are located several miles away and are not easily accessible without a car. Around the country, areas with low median incomes – such as the West Main community – struggle to attract full-service, for-profit grocery stores. As a result, “food deserts” – or areas that lack access to affordable and nutritious fresh foods – are a common in low-income areas. Food deserts contribute to a range of negative health and affordability outcomes.

The area’s large share of renters, concentration of low-income households, and planned development on West Main may bring a future risk of displacement that can be managed and mitigated with a proactive approach.

- Because renters are far more susceptible to rapid changes in the housing market than homeowners, small increases in rent

prices and property values can make it challenging for renters – especially low-income renters – to stay where they are, including for long-term community residents.

- At the far west end of the study area, the first phase of the Bulls Head Revitalization Plan is expected to bring a new mix of commercial and residential uses to the street, including significant off-street parking.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- While community members are eager to see investment in their community and resources to support their neighborhood, people have voice strong concerns about displacement and are keen to see programs that provide housing that serves people at a wide range of income levels and family arrangements.
- People are eager to see new retail move into the neighborhood that meet community needs (like providing fresh food options) and accept EBT and other benefits.
- There is a strong emphasis by community members on the need to improve and produce the quality of housing in the area, with many people interested in program to support renovation of existing homes owned or occupied by long-time residents.
- Community members have stressed the importance of growing capacity and resources for community-led initiatives and decision-making. With new investments made on West Main, there is a strong desire to see returns shared with existing residents.



THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment includes everything you can see, touch, and experience on the street: the sidewalks, street, trees, bus stops, buildings, art, and more. Today, the built environment on West Main has an inconsistent character that fluctuates dramatically from one end of the street to the other.

At the east end of the study area, vast highway infrastructure looms overhead and meets the street with large and loud intersections. Through the middle of the study area, well-defined business clusters are intermixed with buildings set back far from the street and a range of intersection and sidewalk treatments. As the street approaches the study area’s western limit at Chili Ave/West Ave, the area around the street appears to expand with more vacant land and fewer active uses making the edge of the street undefined and exposed.

Though the feeling along West Main is inconsistent throughout the study area, the street and sidewalk space that is publicly owned (also called the “public right-of-way”) is very consistent. At around 66-feet in width, there are only a few locations along the street where the width expands significantly including at the major intersections at Chili Ave/West Ave and Ford Street/West Broad Street. That West Main can feel so different but be very consistent in width throughout the study area reflects the critical role land use and street design elements play in the overall built environment.

In the case of West Main, adjacent land use and street design reflect a tension between the utility of a high-speed vehicle pass-through

route and an historically walkable, human-scaled place. Some sections of the street define West Main as a distinct place that has been nurtured and established, while much of the street perpetuates the idea of West Main as merely a conduit to Downtown from areas farther west.

History of the Built Environment

After white settlers forcefully took land from the Seneca in the 1700s, West Main Street was laid out in the 1800s as a major route connecting Rochester toward Buffalo and was thus named “Buffalo Street.” After the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, which was originally located where Broad Street is today, the street was renamed West Avenue because it was to the west of the canal. It was not until much later – into the 1910s – that the street was finally renamed West Main Street.

Even in the early years of West Main, the street was home to a mix of uses as it is today. The eastern end of the street closer to Downtown was mostly industrial. Two railroad stations existed along West Main until the 1950s. One of those rail station buildings – the current site of Nick Tahou Hots – still exists. Morse Lumber, which was established in 1853, also still occupies its original spot on West Main. From 1864 to 1966, the Rochester General Hospital served as a Civil War, WWI, and WWII military hospital on the site where the Anthony Square apartments now stand.

West of Jefferson Avenue West Main had a stronger mix of commercial and residential buildings until the 1960s when many properties were cleared and converted to commercial uses. At the intersection of Genesee Street/Brown Street/Chili Avenue, a commercial node known as ‘Bulls Head’ has long existed, named



Top: Bridge over the original alignment of the Erie Canal, where Broad Street stands today. The building at 242 West Main, which exists today, is seen in the background. Photo Credit: Rochester Public Library.

Below: Modern day photo of 242 West Main with the 490 overpass shown overhead.

after a pub that stood there in the 1800's. Over the centuries since then, Bull's Head has changed in nature many times from the tavern for weary travelers in the 1800s to an orphanage for boys in the first half of the 1900s to the current Bull's Head plaza established in the 1950s. The next chapter in the Bull's Head story is now unfolding; After decades of discussions, the City has issued a call for proposals to redevelop a portion of the Bull's Head area as part of a plan to clean up contaminated land and spur economic development on underutilized and vacant sites.

Saint Mary's Hospital was founded at the far west end of the study area in the mid-1800s and remained in operation until the late 1990s. The Saint Mary's campus still provides a range of health services and clinics for the community, including recently-renewed long-term acute care, but is no longer run as a traditional hospital.



Looking east down West Main at King Street with streetcar tracks laid in both directions. Photo Credit: Rochester Municipal Archives.

While the land uses and buildings along West Main have changed over time, so too has the transportation system. With streets made of dirt and stone, people traveled by foot, horse, and carriage during the earliest days of urban activity on West Main. In 1863, streetcar tracks were laid for horse drawn carriages down West Main followed by the introduction of electric streetcars in 1895. In the early 1900s, people along West Main could choose from a multitude of streetcar routes that would take them along West Main to destinations all across Rochester including North Avenue, West Avenue, North Clinton Avenue, Jefferson Street, Genesee Street, Central Park, Parsells Avenue, and East Main. Streetcar service was active along West Main until 1940 when streetcars were replaced by bus service.



Looking east down West Main toward the intersection of Brown Street and Genesee Street. Photo Credit: Rochester Municipal Archives

The rapid rise of personal cars throughout the 20th century left a lasting impact on West Main. Middle class families – the vast majority of whom were white – were enabled by their cars to move away from their jobs in central business districts to reside in suburbs, a movement often referred to as 'white flight.' Beginning in the 1950s, the federal government began handing out massive subsidies to State and local governments to build a nationwide highway system that would give newly settled suburban families direct access to their jobs downtown. At the same time, government interest and investment in good public transit stalled and has never truly recovered. Rochester's first urban highway – the Inner Loop – was planned and started construction in the late 1950s. The alignment of the highway reinforced the harm caused by redlining in the preceding decades by targeting areas that had been systematically denied resources. Highway construction and the era of urban renewal demolished historically Black neighborhoods and displaced residents along Plymouth Avenue between High Falls and Fitzhugh Street.

A decade later, a plan to connect I-490 to the rest of the region was made and the western portion of the recently-constructed Inner Loop was relocated to meet the new highway alignment. Once again, homes and residents in the heart of Black neighborhoods were cleared to make way for suburban commuters on the highway above. Anchor institutions were also incentivized to move away; when Rochester Institute of Technology learned that the highway was slated to run through a portion of their campus, the university decided to complete divest from Downtown and build its suburban

Right: Aerial imagery of Rochester shows the progression of highway construction and urban renewal to the east of the study area in 1951, 1961, 1970, and 1980.





Heading west from
Downtown under the
490 Bridge

campus in Henrietta.

Today, the looming I-490 viaduct marks the eastern edge of the study area for this project, though its impacts on West Main go far beyond just infrastructure. The construction of I-490 destroyed neighborhoods and communities and in their place built physical barriers that disconnect residents from opportunities. The highways also ushered in decades of disinvestment by subsidizing the automotive movement of primarily white and wealthier suburbanites at the expense of depleting the urban tax base, a challenge that the City of Rochester and cities across the U.S. continue to grapple with 50 years later.

Transportation Conditions

With the historical context of the street in mind, this section explores current transportation patterns on West Main. At 66 feet in width, the majority of West Main includes approximately 8-foot sidewalks on each side of the street, 4 vehicle travel lanes totaling approximately 40-42 feet, and an additional 8-10 feet that is used either for one lane of on-street parallel parking or turn lanes for cars at intersections.

People who live around West Main Street have a lower rate of vehicle access than the Citywide average.

- On average, 26% of Rochester residents do not have access to a vehicle. In the areas around West Main, 40% of residents do not have access to a vehicle.
- Car access is not evenly distributed, even within the study area. North of West Main, car access is higher than the city average **1**, but to the southwest as many as 65% of households do not have access to a car. **2**

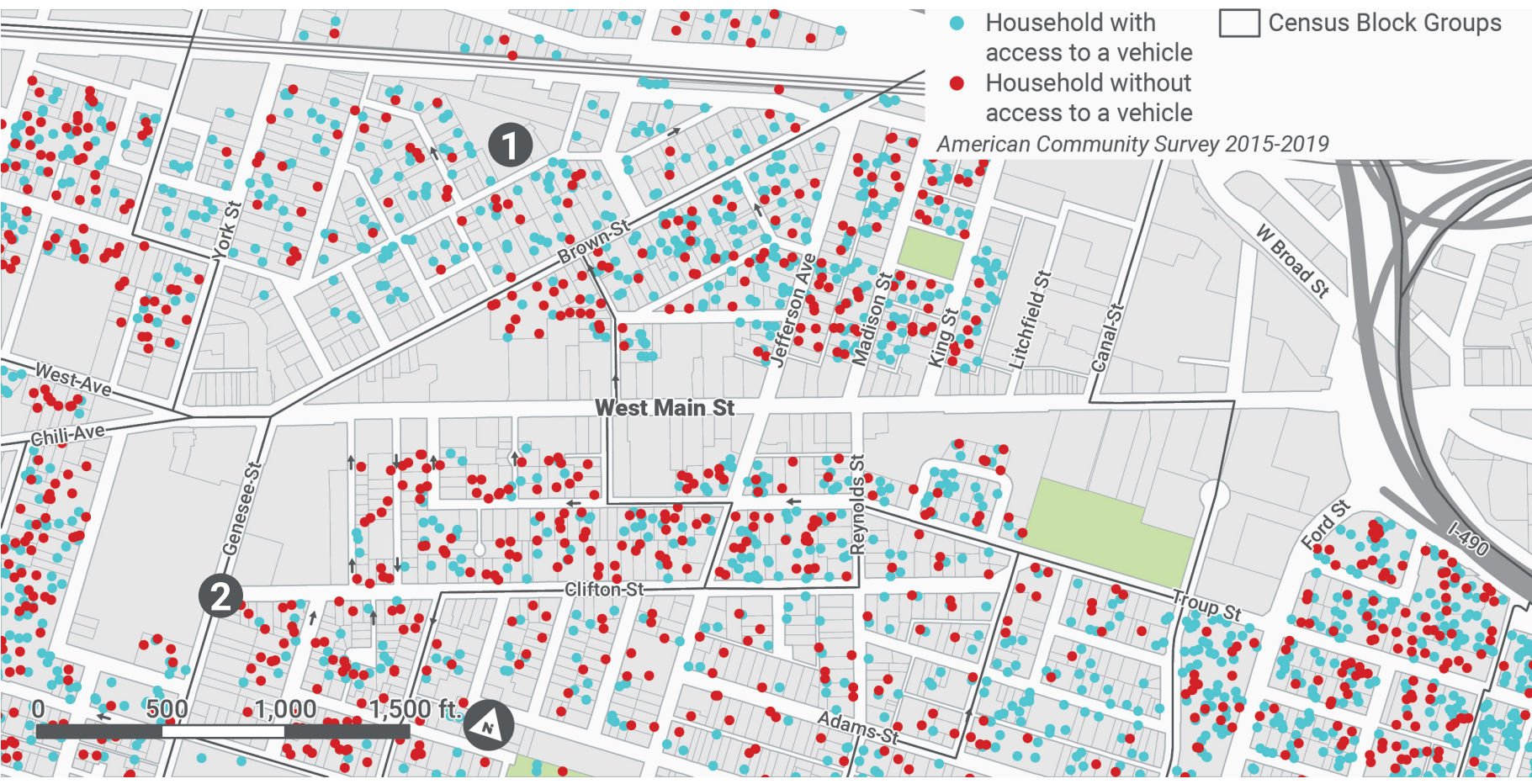


Figure 6. Distribution of Household Vehicle Access by Census Block Group (1 dot = 1 household)

People who live around West Main take the bus to work at almost double the City's average rate.

- Citywide, about 10% of people use transit to get to work; around West Main, about 19% of residents use transit for their commutes.
- In the southwest portion of the study area, as many as 40% of people use transit to get to work. ❶
- Census data is limited - it only reports how people commute to work, even though most trips that people make (for example to the grocery store, to daycare, or to appointments) are not for work.

From January 2015 through December 2019, a crash was reported on West Main every 3.5 days on average.

- In the five-year period between 2015 and 2019, 504 crashes occurred on West Main. Around 21% (105 crashes) resulted in an injury.

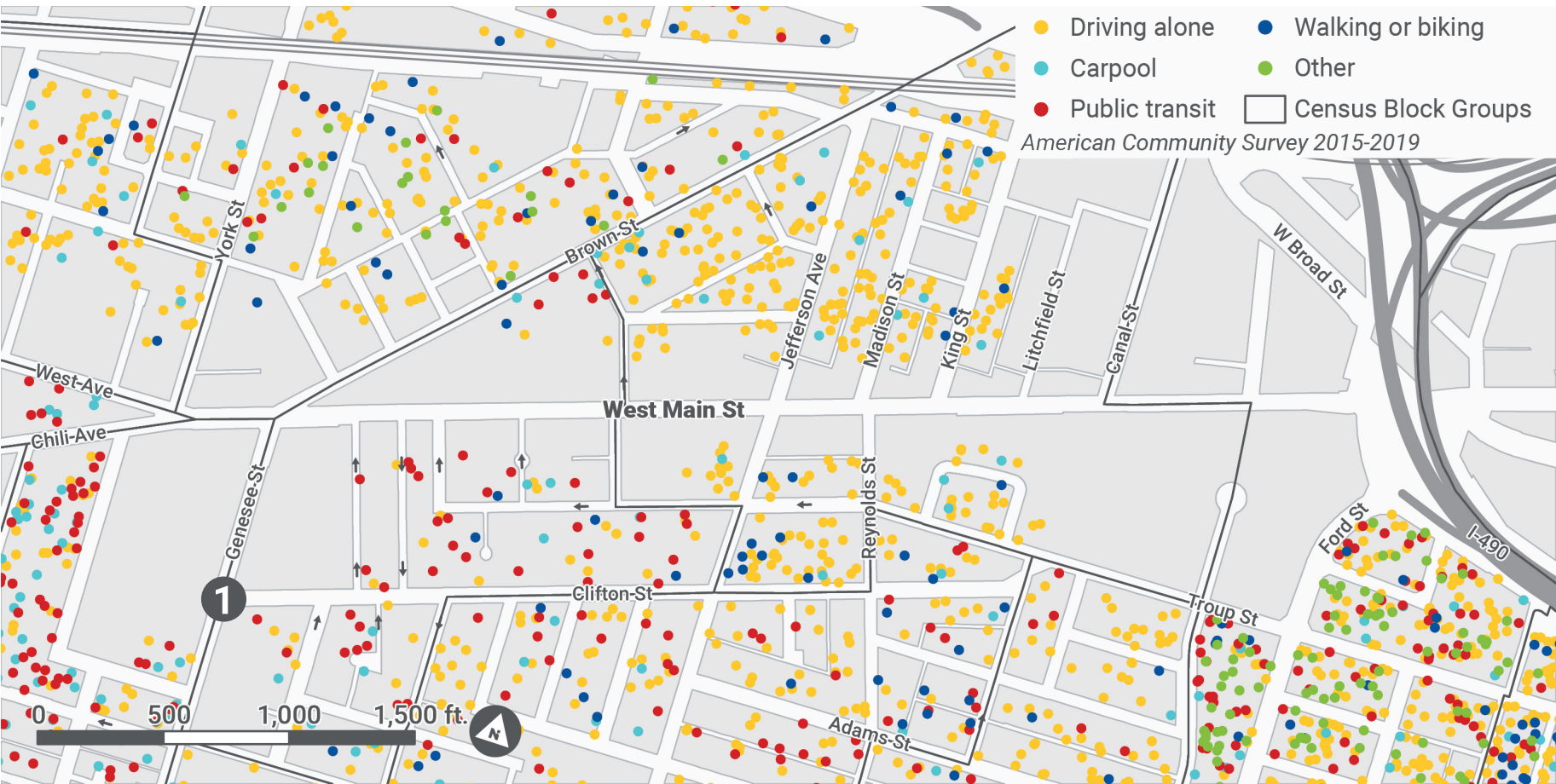


Figure 7. Commute Mode Distribution by Census Block Group (1 dot = 1 worker)

- Crashes on West Main happen virtually everywhere along the street, however there are some intersections that experience more crashes and more serious crashes. The intersections at Genesee Street, ❶ Jefferson Ave, ❷ and Madison/Reynolds Streets ❸ are particularly common crash locations.
- 94% of crashes on West Main involved people driving motor vehicles, and most of these crashes resulted in property damage only. However, 72% of crashes involving a person walking or biking resulted in an injury.
- Outside of reported crashes, emergency department data from 2013 to 2016 reveal that pedestrians and bicyclists on West Main require medical attention after being hit by a car at a higher rate than the citywide average and triple the rate of Monroe county.
- No fatal crashes were reported on West Main Street between 2015 and 2019, however a crash in 2012 killed a person biking and a crash in 2013 killed a person walking. In March 2021, a person driving lost their life in a crash at the intersection of West Main and Genesee Street.

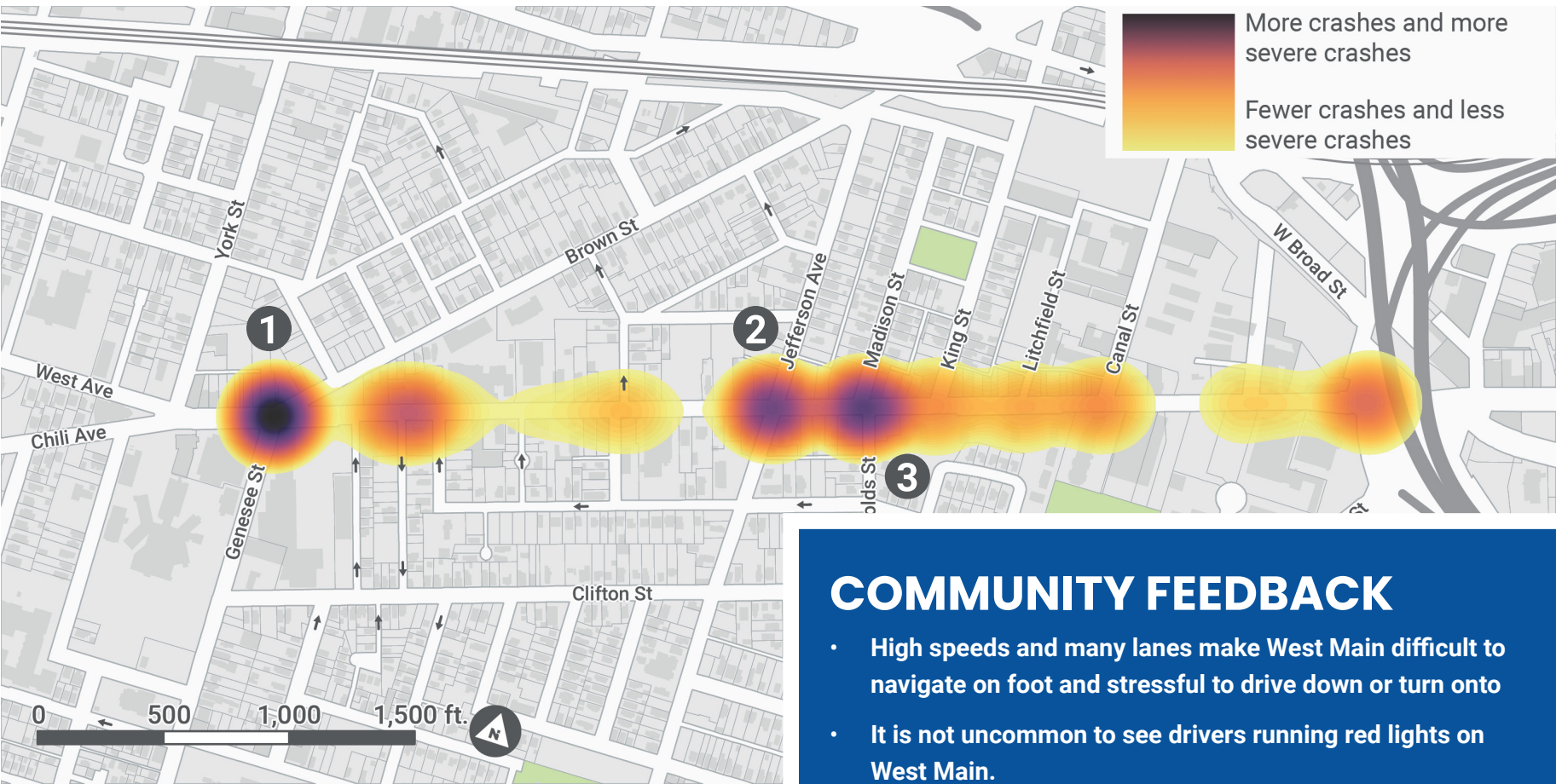


Figure 8. Density of Crashes Along West Main Weighted by Severity (2015-2019)

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- High speeds and many lanes make West Main difficult to navigate on foot and stressful to drive down or turn onto
- It is not uncommon to see drivers running red lights on West Main.

Conditions for people walking on West Main vary widely throughout the project area.

- Of the 14 locations where other streets intersect West Main, 8 (57%) include crosswalks.
- Crosswalks are closer together on the eastern end of the street. Toward the west end of the street, crosswalks are more sparse; between Jefferson Ave and Henion Street (four blocks, 1,500 feet, a 5-8 minute walk), no crosswalks are provided. There are also 4 bus stops at locations without a crosswalk; observations from April 2021 showed that nearly 300 people in one day crossed the street near the Family Dollar even though there is no crosswalk present. People crossing the street outside of designated crossing locations were also observed at Madison Street.
- According to pedestrian counts published in early 2020, West Main has the most foot traffic in the areas where it meets Jefferson Avenue, Henion Street, and West Avenue/Chili Avenue/ York Street.
- Sidewalk conditions are generally good throughout the study area, though there are some locations with narrow, uneven, or broken sidewalks. In addition, sidewalk conditions on connecting side streets vary and can impede access by disabled people traveling to and from the study area. Some portions of the sidewalk on West Main are frequently interrupted by driveways, while other sections are more continuous. Sidewalk conditions at driveway crossings are in general much more deteriorated than portions of the sidewalks that are not traveled by vehicles.
- While most curb ramps at intersections throughout the study area appear to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), some intersections are missing curb ramps entirely or are missing detectable warnings, which provide texture and color contrast to give visually impaired people an indication that they are about to enter a dangerous area (i.e. the street).
- Many of the push buttons for 'WALK' signals are relatively new

and include Accessible Pedestrian Signals, which give visually impaired people an audible and sometimes tactile indication of when it is time to cross. However, some intersections do not include Accessible Pedestrian Signals or have signals that are located too far away from the crosswalk to be useful or intuitive.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- **Sidewalks are too narrow in many locations on West Main.**
- **Sidewalk conditions sometimes impede access, particularly on the brick sections and for people using wheelchairs. Sidewalks need to be more consistently and reliably cleared of snow.**
- **Crossing the intersecting streets on West Main is difficult because of turning drivers.**
- **It can be hard to tell when it's safe to cross West Main at crosswalks and difficult to find and operate crossing buttons.**
- **A crosswalk is needed in front of Family Dollar, to serve both the corresponding bus stop and the steady stream of people crossing in this location already each day.**
- **Recorded crashes do not provide a complete picture of pedestrian safety on West Main, as near-misses are common and people walking are accustomed to giving up their right of way to drivers in order to avoid collisions.**
- **Vehicle speeds are high, and people walking along West Main say they're most comfortable when there is some separation from the vehicle travel lanes, whether it's by street parking or wider sidewalks.**



Photos showing a range of conditions for people walking, including people crossing the street where no crosswalks exist.



Each day, an average of 560 people get on buses and 592 people get off buses along West Main.

- There are 10 stops going toward downtown and 9 stops coming from downtown within the study area, though some stops are more popular than others. Of the 560 bus trips that start on West Main each day, 55% start at just four bus stops ❶, two of which have bus shelters to make waiting for the bus more pleasant.
- While the locations where people get on the bus are very concentrated, the places people get off are more dispersed; this

points to preferences expressed by many for bus stops with features - like bus shelters - that make waiting for the bus feel less exposed, as well as for bus stops with a lot of activity going on around them, which adds to the feeling of personal security.

- Today, buses stop in-lane. In other words, buses do not pull in and out of their travel lane at bus stops, but rather stop in the travel lane to let passengers get on or off the bus.
- In the winter, uncleared snow on sidewalks and streets make bus stops inaccessible and difficult to use, with some people opting to wait for the bus in the street instead.



With the Reimagine RTS plan now implemented, West Main now carries two Frequent Service routes.

- The 16 Genesee and 18 Chili provides frequent bus service on West Main. Between 6AM and 6PM, buses from each routes arrive at stops every 15 minutes. During other hours, the bus comes every 30 minutes.
- Other Local Service routes arrives at stops every 30 minutes between 6AM and 6PM and every 60 minutes during other hours.
- Bus routes on West Main provide access to a wide range of destinations and employment centers including Downtown, Strong Hospital, and MCC's Brighton Campus. However, the implementation of the Reimagine RTS plan did reduce the total number of bus routes serving West Main from four to three and eliminated connections to several important destinations.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- There should be bus shelters on both sides of the street at bus stops, and they should be better cleaned and maintained.
- The design of West Main should allow buses to move through the street efficiently.
- Waiting for the bus on the sidewalk can be uncomfortable with no barrier between the waiting area and fast-moving traffic. Bus stops with wider sidewalks feel safer.
- Bus stops near active businesses and with a lot of activity going on around them are preferable for waiting, though some people and women in particular say that they sometimes feel uncomfortable waiting for the bus when people linger or consume alcohol at bus stops.



People wait for the bus at Henion Street.

There is no separate space for people who bike on West Main.

- There are several bike lanes that connect to the ends of the study area, including bike lanes on West Ave and West Main Street to the east of the study area in Downtown. Beginning at Genesee Street and extending into Downtown, Troup Street is included in the 2019 Bike Boulevard Master Plan as a low-volume, low-speed street to help connect people biking with their destinations.



- Bike parking is provided in some locations along West Main, and some community members have noted that additional secure bike parking would be useful for multi-modal connections.
- With no clear or safe space for people to bike along West Main, many people bike along the sidewalk while others are confident riding in the street alongside traffic. In some cases, people bike in the wrong direction on the street for better visibility and sense of control.



Around 19,400 vehicles traveled along West Main each day in 2019.

- In the eastbound direction (toward Downtown), vehicle traffic picks up around 7AM and stays fairly constant throughout the day at around 600 vehicles per hour. ❶ In the westbound direction (away from Downtown), vehicle traffic picks up sharply between 4PM and 6PM, suggesting that people use West Main more commonly as a way home from work than a way to work. ❷

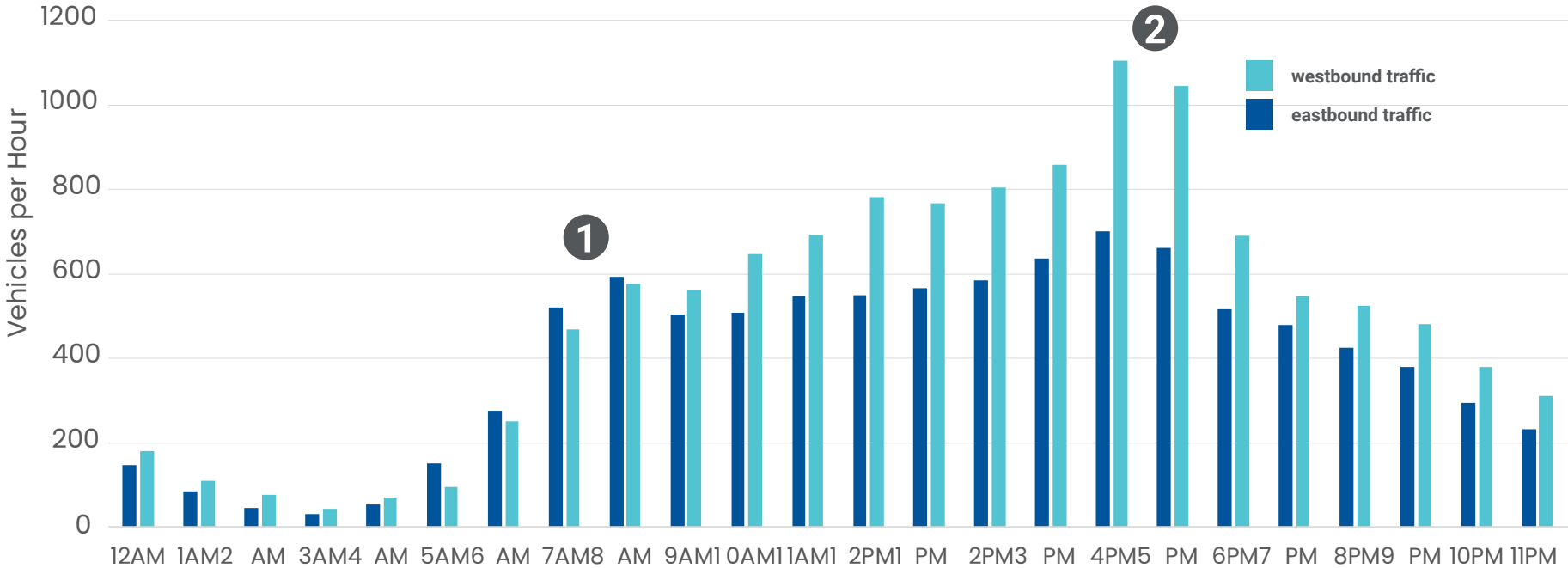


Figure 10. Traffic on West Main by Hour (2019)

Left: Today, people ride where they feel safest or most comfortable. For most, that is on the sidewalk. For others it is in the street either with or against vehicle traffic. In some cases, the mix of bike, pedestrian, and bus activity makes for a crowded sidewalk.

- In 2019, the average speed of people driving on West Main was 33 mph. Around 15% of drivers (3,000 vehicles per day) were recorded traveling above 40 mph, greatly increasing the risk of serious injury or death in the event of a crash.
- Counts taken in April 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic show reductions of vehicle traffic at intersections along West Main ranging from 5% to 46% over pre-pandemic conditions.

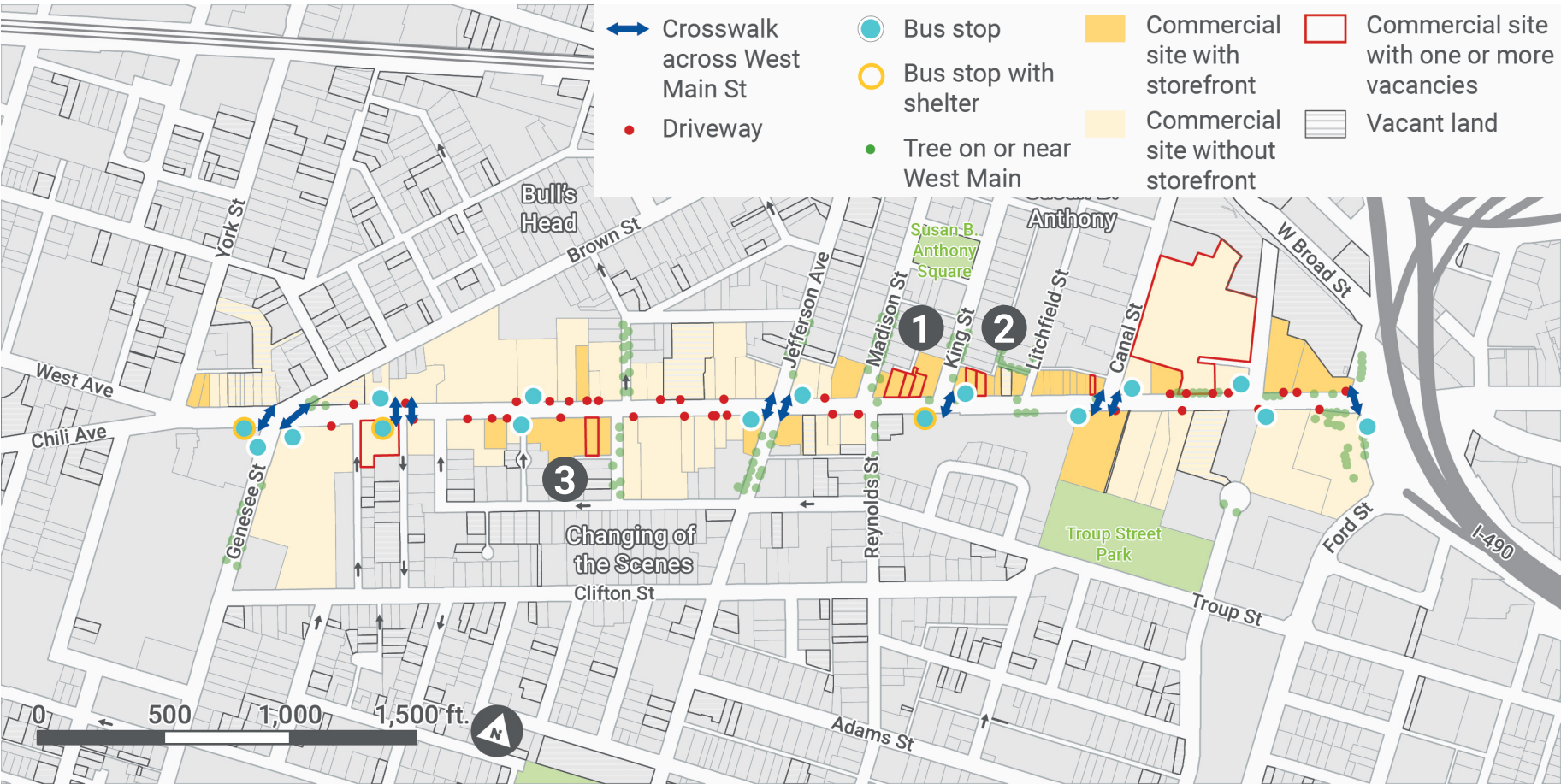
COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- People biking don't have a good place to ride on West Main, so they ride in many different ways to feel safe including against traffic and on the sidewalk.
- High traffic speeds and complicated intersections make West Main a stressful street to bike on.

Public Realm

Today, the public realm on West Main reflects opposing uses of the street: in some areas West Main reveals its legacy as well-established neighborhood commercial center at the edge of Downtown. In other areas, West Main has the character of a pass-through street serving regional traffic that speeds in and out of the City without much of an interest in the surroundings.

Figure 11. Pedestrian Experience Elements



The pedestrian environment on West Main changes throughout the study area. Some areas are active and engaging for pedestrians while others are not.

- Clusters of commercial spaces with storefronts close to the street edge create an interesting place to walk on West Main St. However, the presence of vacant storefronts and storefronts that do not appear busy may limit how welcoming these blocks currently feel. **1**

- On any given stretch of West Main Street one side of the street is generally more inviting and active for people walking. East of Jefferson Avenue, the north side of the street is generally more welcoming for walking. **2** To the west of Jefferson Avenue, the south side is more active. **3**
- Some portions of the street – primarily in the eastern portion of the study area – have a brick area for furnishings at the edge of the curb. While the brick has held up well in some locations, it is unsettled in others.
- Frequent driveway crossings make walking along West Main less safe, comfortable, and pleasant. Studies show that the more exposure to traffic stress people feel, the less likely they are to walk or bike.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Preserving and enhancing historic buildings should be a priority.
- Any improvements and amenities in the pedestrian realm must be accompanied by dedicated resources for maintenance.
- More consistent pedestrian-scale lighting would create a more comfortable environment for walking.
- There is potential in some areas for businesses to make their storefronts more engaging.
- Slowing down vehicle speeds and providing buffers between people walking and travel lanes – like parked cars or wider sidewalks – would make walking better.
- People point to both traffic safety and personal security (perceptions of crime) as existing concerns on West Main.

- Many buildings along West Main contribute to an unengaging and unwelcoming walking and social experience along West Main St. Buildings set back behind lawns, fences, or parking lots as well as those which ‘turn their backs’ on the street with long expanses of wall lacking windows or doors communicate to people walking that they are not welcome.

West Main Street has many historic buildings and displays of public art honoring local culture and leaders.

- From street murals to decorative light fixtures to painted utility boxes, art and cultural displays on West Main come in many forms. However, artistic expressions are more sparse toward the west end of the study area near Chili Avenue.
- The City of Rochester’s Heritage Trail – a 1.25-mile self-guided tour – is noted on the north side of West Main between the eastern limit of the study area at West Broad Street to Madison Street. The heritage trail is demarcated on the sidewalk using a mix of inset pavers and paint.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Lifting up the contemporary identity and the future of West Main through public art is just as important as the historic legacies honored along the street.
- New public art should be created in collaboration with residents and the public to ensure it is reflective of what they take pride in and what they want to promote.
- Existing public art is well received, and people would like to see more similar art in the same kinds of locations.
- On the east side of the study area, there is an opportunity for public art to create a gateway to Center City.



"Her Voice Carries" by Sarah C. Rutherford



Mural under 490 by Shawn Dunwoody



Untitled work by DAleast



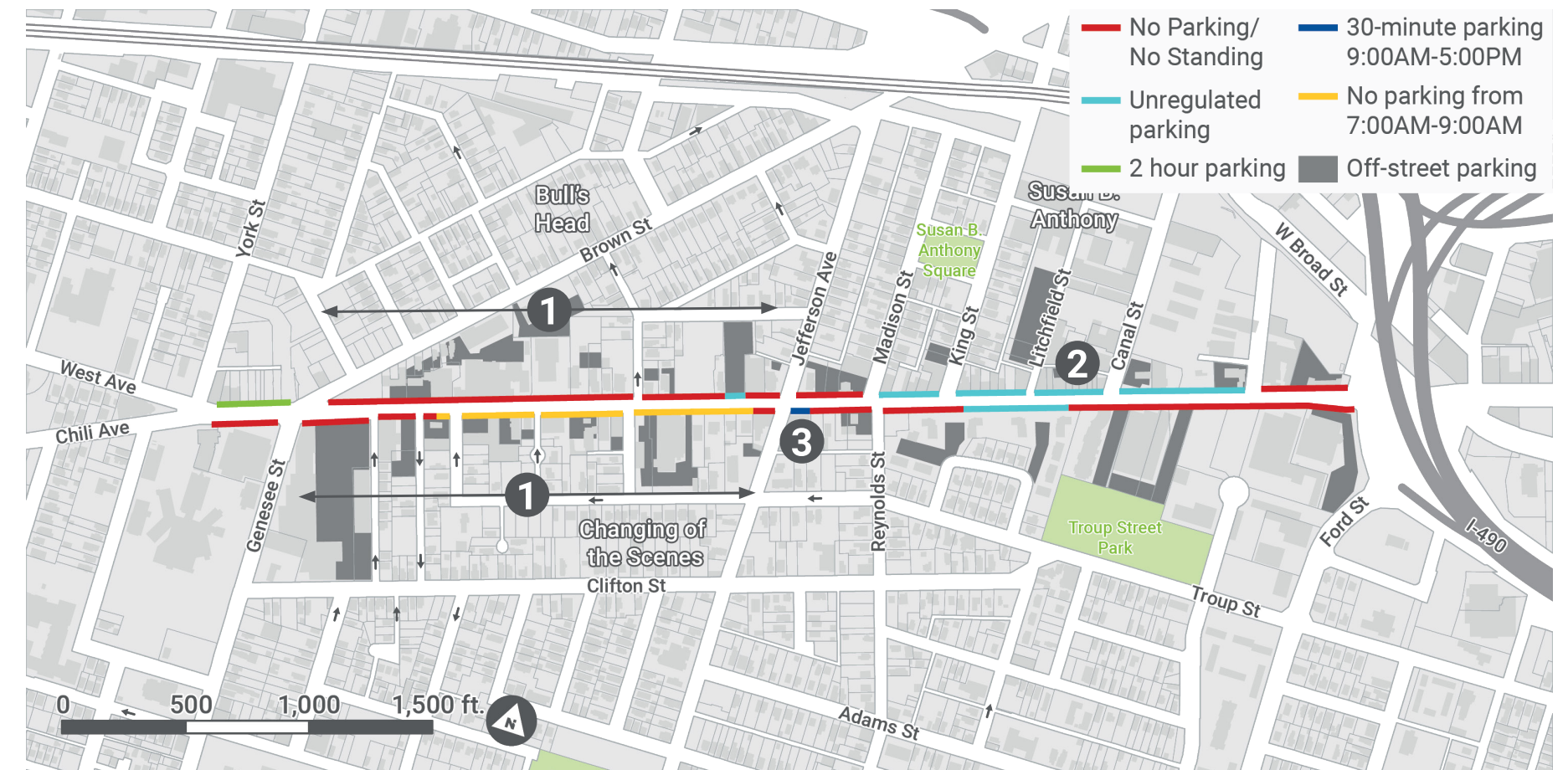
Along most of West Main Street, there is no on-street parking or other curbside uses allowed on-street.

- The areas of West Main that do not have on-street parking have more frequent driveways that provide access to off-street parking lots. **1**
- There are a few stretches of West Main that provide on-street parking, most of which is unregulated. Community members have reported that double parking is common in front of some businesses and that more parking for businesses and residents is

desired. **2** Parking use data has not been collected or analyzed recently.

- In many cases, on-street parking is provided in parking bays delineated by a flush curb and a concrete street surface. In many locations, the condition of the concrete and flush curb in parking bays has deteriorated and has become a place where water and trash collect.
- There is a small number of 30-minute parking spaces near the intersection of Jefferson Ave and West Main to facilitate quick stops at the surrounding businesses. **3**

Figure 12. Curbside Uses and Regulations



West Main Street has fewer street trees in the public right-of-way compared to the other streets in the neighborhood.

- Without many street trees on West Main, there are few barriers or buffers between people walking on the sidewalks and vehicle traffic within the street. A lack of shade can also contribute to West Main feeling uncomfortably hot in the summer.
- There are few parks or open space near West Main Street, particularly on the end closer to Chili Avenue. ❶

- There are many contaminated or potentially contaminated sites along West Main Street and in nearby neighborhoods. Contaminated sites exist in part due to current or former uses that leave behind difficult to clean residues in soils (such as gas stations, auto shops, and dry cleaners). ❷

Figure 13. Environmental Assets and Challenges



There are few places for the community to gather on West Main.

- Throughout West Main, there are very few places that encourage social interaction or support community gatherings.
- The two defined spaces for gathering that do exist along the street – a small seating area next to 1872 Café and a plaza area within the triangular-shaped land where West Main and Brown Street meet – serve different uses. Next to 1872 Café, benches are situated along the edges of a small circular area that opens to a formal pathway leading to Troup Street Park. The layout of the small seating area supports very small, passive gatherings of people seated on benches. At the far west end of the study area, the plaza at West Main/Brown Street includes a mix of seating types, trees, and elevated planting areas. The design is more flexible in its layout than the small seating area at 1872 Café, however the location of the plaza with fast moving traffic along two sides and a vacant lot on the third side leaves the plaza feeling very exposed and loud. In addition, this space will likely be redesigned and reconstructed in the coming years as part of the Bull's Head Revitalization Project.
- Aside from these spaces, there are few sidewalks or public spaces large enough or enclosed enough to support community gatherings. Several curb extensions along the street are quite large and create sidewalks spaces of around 15 feet in width, however these spaces are not programmed today and are few and far between.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Sustaining the usefulness and appeal of gathering spaces will require dedicated resources for maintenance as well as a sense of community ownership and pride.
- Bus stops are already important gathering places, and some people want to explore ways to incorporate greenery, play areas, and other amenities around bus stops.
- Repurposing vacant land for gathering space is of interest to some people, though environmental contamination could present challenges.
- There is tension between different groups of people and how they use space for gathering; some people share that they feel uncomfortable in some spaces where people currently gather throughout the day.
- Creation of new or refreshed public spaces should be led by existing residents of the West Main community. Community organizations and residents need to be engaged, compensated, and empowered to lead this work.

The land use regulations on West Main Street give the area a lot of flexibility to meet a wide range of the community's housing, retail, and other needs, even if all those needs are not being met today.

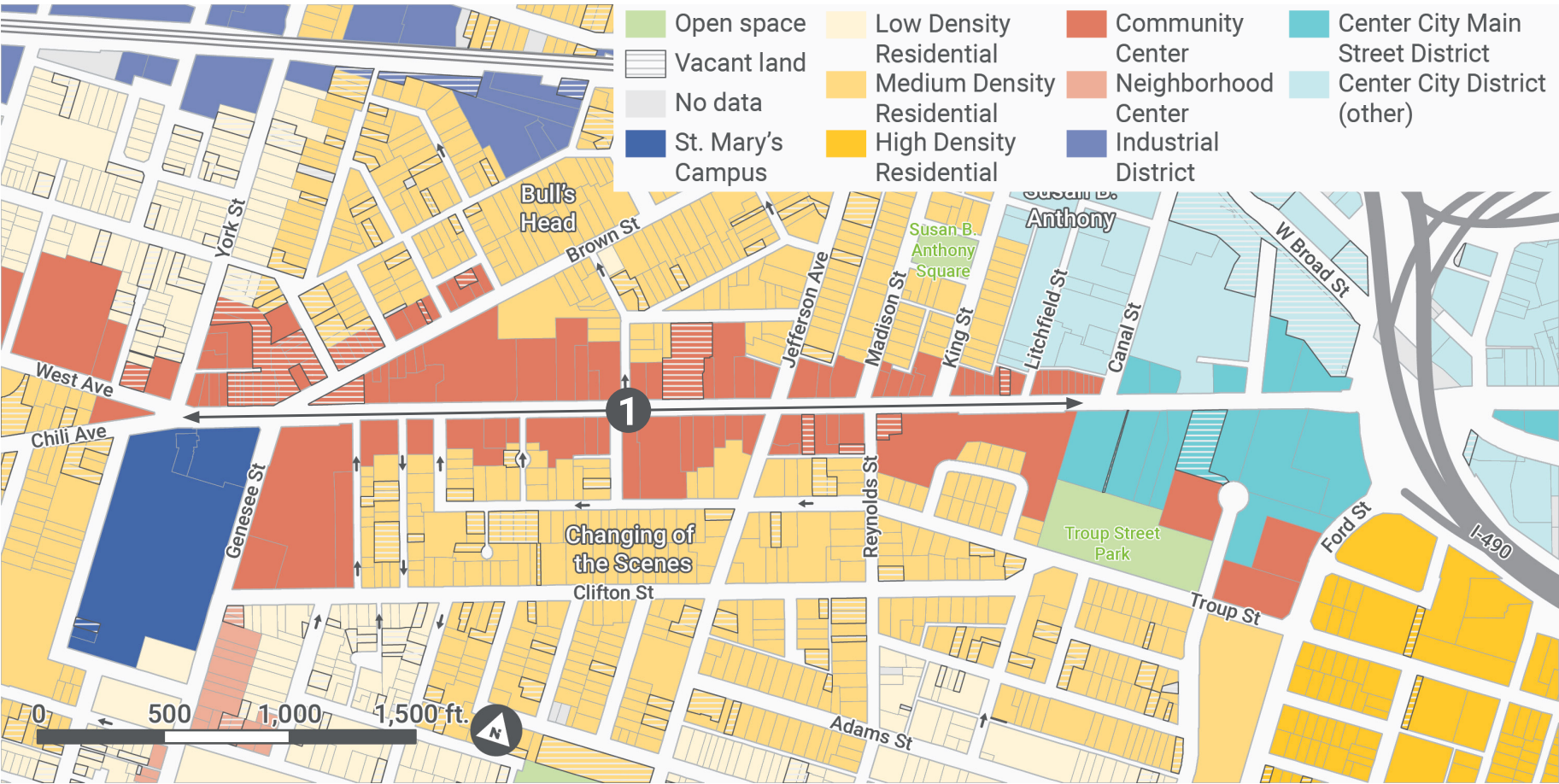
- The City's zoning code regulates what kinds of uses are allowed on a piece of land. West Main is almost entirely designated for "Community Center" uses, which are very flexible. ❶ From multifamily housing to offices to restaurants, the City's zoning regulations on West Main make it easy for many different types of uses to exist along the street.

Though there is not much completely vacant land on West Main, there are clusters of storefronts that are available for lease.

- There are pockets of vacant land in the surrounding neighborhoods, however there is little vacant land on West Main Street itself. Of the five vacant parcels on West Main, two are city-owned. Privately-owned vacant parcels represent a larger amount of unused land by area.

- Vacant parcels on the west side of the study area are primarily publicly owned and planned for development as part of the Bull's Head Revitalization Plan.
- There are 10 commercial storefronts available for lease on West Main, many clustered between Madison Street and Litchfield Street.

Figure 14. Existing Zoning and Land Use



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Ideas about regarding how the community would like to see vacant land repurposed including:

- Housing, including supportive or transitional housing.
- Mixed-use development that brings in jobs and regional visitors.
- Space for infill retail to serve the neighborhood and people who use West Main.
- Off-street parking.
- Open space for recreation and play.
- Multi-use open space for community-led uses and programming like community gardens, flea markets, farmers markets, food trucks, and pop-up events.
- Recurring festivals and community celebrations

Coming Soon

A vacant storefront on West Main.

ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

This is the beginning of a conversation about the future of West Main. As this project moves on from this first phase of building a shared understanding of existing conditions on West Main, the focus will shift to defining a future vision for the street and outlining steps to achieve it.

To begin the process of visioning, a series of steering committee conversations, pop-up events along the corridor, and surveys were used to start naming desired outcomes for West Main. Building from a long list of goals that were established through other recent planning initiatives, stakeholders and the public were asked to reflect on and directly refine these goals to ensure they reflect West Main’s specific needs.

After two rounds of iteration, three primary goals were set out for West Main.

In the next phase of the project the City, the project steering committee, and the public will begin exploring specific design solutions, policy initiatives, coalitions and key partners, and other considerations to identify action steps that move these goals forward. Once this visioning project has ended and implementation begins, sustained collaboration with residents and other people who care about West Main will be critical to ensure that these communities have ownership over the vision and its outcomes.

To stay involved with the project and learn more, visit the project website at cityofrochester.gov/wmain.

Improve safety, accessibility, and connectivity

- Provide a high-quality experience for people taking the bus by providing bus stop amenities and supporting reliable transit operations on the street
- Implement design features that slow cars down and provide safe and accessible spaces for pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities
- Provide a comfortable, inviting, and well-maintained pedestrian realm through streetscape enhancements including street trees, pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, planters, and outdoor spaces for businesses

Support sustainable communities and grow community wealth

- Leverage temporary uses on vacant land before permanent development or reuse to support business growth and community uses
- Support local businesses by expanding existing small business programs, increasing local job opportunities throughout workforce training, and incentivizing new employers to locate near West Main
- Incentivize businesses to location on West Main that fill gaps in existing services such as grocery stores, bakeries, banks, and restaurants
- Support and expand high-quality affordable housing opportunities and create strong anti-displacement policies before making major infrastructure investments

Celebrate and promote history, culture, and legacy

- Establish resources, communication channels, and decision-making processes that empower community organizers to shape implementation of the vision for West Main
- Acknowledge, promote, and preserve elements of cultural significance to the neighborhood including inspirations of the past, present, and future
- Fund and promote creative, community-oriented activities and local artists including street murals, sculptures, festivals, and other artistic expressions

Thank you

Thank you to the project Steering Committee members and organizations who have generously shared their time and insights through many meetings, emails, phone calls, and conversations with their organizations and neighbors:

Abby McHugh-Grifa - Climate Solutions Accelerator

Anne-Marie Brogan – Neighborhood resident

Bill Belec – Trillium Health and the MOCHA Center

Blue Cease – West Main Business Association and Rochester Contemporary Art Center

Bob Williams – Genesee Transportation Council

Brandt Smith – Monroe County Department of Transportation

Chris McDonald – Street Liaison

Dan Hoffman – West Main Street Business Owner

Dan Kenyon – Rochester Genesee Regional Transit Service

Dawn Noto – Susan B. Anthony Neighborhood Association

Deborah Hughes - National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House

Demetrius Washington-Ellison – West Main Street business owner

Dr. Lomax Campbell – City of Rochester, Office of Community Wealth Building

Erik Frisch – City of Rochester, Department of Environmental Services

Jason Haremza – Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council

Jay Arzu – Neighborhood resident

Jesse Peers – Reconnect Rochester

John DeMott – Street Liaison, 19th Ward Community Association

John Lightfoot – Changing of the Scenes Neighborhood Association

Julie Boasi – Rochester Genesee Regional Transit Service

Kevin Kelley – City of Rochester, Planning Office

Lora Leon – New York State Department of Transportation

Lin Stango – Rochester Housing Authority

Luticha Doucette – Owner of Catalyst Consulting

Mike Bulger – Common Ground Health

Rick Rynski – City of Rochester, Department of Neighborhood and Business Development

Ronalyn Pollack – Native American Culture Center

Shawn Burr – Rochester Housing Authority

Tatiana Spencer – Youth ambassador

Yolanda Allen – Rochester Genesee Regional Transit Service

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