



# ROCHESTER

## TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE CORRIDORS STUDY

*FINAL 09.13.18*



Prepared by WSP for the Department of Neighborhood  
and Business Development, City of Rochester, NY



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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As part of its Comprehensive Plan, Rochester 2034, the City of Rochester has established a vision for coordinating land use and transportation decisions in order to create a multimodal, transit-supportive, and sustainable community. To help achieve this, the City has undertaken this Transit-Supportive Corridors Study, and has identified twelve corridors that will become the focus for “transit-supportive development”. Transit-supportive development aligns the City’s vision for land use and development with the investment in transit by encouraging vibrant, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods along transit corridors where people have the ability to live, work, and play. Transit-supportive development increases mobility choice and access to employment and services and provides health benefits by promoting active lifestyles, all while reducing transportation costs.

The Rochester Transit-Supportive Corridors Study compliments several other ongoing planning efforts in Rochester, including the Reimagine RTS effort and the City of Rochester Comprehensive Access & Mobility Plan (CAMP). Aligning investment in transportation with land use policy to create transit-supportive communities in Rochester will help achieve the vision of Rochester 2034 and ready the region to compete for economic growth.

### PUBLIC INPUT

The development of this report was aided by input from a Project Advisory Committee and public input. A Project Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from Regional Transit Service (RTS), Genesee Transportation Council (GTC), Monroe County, New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), Reconnect Rochester, the Community Design Center of Rochester, and City staff representing Planning, Buildings and Zoning, Business and Housing Development, Architecture and Engineering,

and the Mayor’s Office of Innovation was formed to provide input, review consultant work, and share local knowledge throughout the study.

Two public input meetings were held to present elements of this project and to gather community feedback. Additionally, a survey was prepared and made available via an online weblink and hard copies made available upon request. The first public input meeting was held at the Rochester Public Market on February 10, 2018 from 8am to noon to gather initial feedback on transit-supportive elements that are desired by the community. A survey was available online from January 31-April 16, 2018, and generated 436 responses. A final public input open house was held on July 26, 2018 from 5-7pm in City Council Chamber to gather feedback on draft corridors analysis and recommendations.

### WHAT IS TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE DEVELOPMENT?

Planning for and implementing successful transit-supportive corridors involves decisions that directly influence land use, public realm, multimodal transportation, urban form, and overall performance as a place. There are eight basic principles that define the essential characteristics of a successful transit supportive corridor, and include:

- Medium to Higher Density Development
- A Mix of Land Uses
- Compact, High-Quality Pedestrian Environment
- Active & Vibrant Center
- Multimodal Connectivity
- High-Frequency of Enhanced Transit
- Public & Community Leadership
- Linked, Managed Parking

This Rochester Transit-Supportive Corridors Study consists of three main components, a zoning analysis of how transit-supportive the City's current zoning code is, an evaluation of transit-supportive corridors in the City of Rochester, and a peer review of how other cities are planning for and implementing transit-supportive development.

### ANALYZING ROCHESTER'S CURRENT ZONING: HOW TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE IS IT?

The City of Rochester Zoning Code (Chapter 120: Zoning) was reviewed and analyzed to determine the overall transit-supportiveness of each zoning district. In order to understand each zoning district's transit-supportiveness, zoning districts were analyzed using criteria that is based on the generally accepted transit-supportive guidance outlined in this report, categorized into Building Form, Lot Characteristics, Street Frontage, and Parking. Each zoning district was given a score based on how well the zoning district addressed criteria under these four categories. Scores were tallied to offer a final score which is used to determine how transit-supportive the zoning district is, as follows:

The following table and map summarize the results of the zoning analysis, portraying the zoning districts evaluated based on the transit-supportive score each received. Dark green shades identify very highly transit-supportive zoning districts, yellowish shades show highly transit-supportive zoning districts, orange shades show moderately transit-supportive zoning districts, and red shades show minimally transit-supportive zoning districts.

Zoning District	Name	Score
CCD	Center City	48
C-V	Collegetown Village	46
M-D	Marina District	43
H-V	Harbortown Village District	37
PMV	Public Market District	36
C-2	Community Commercial	35
C-1	Neighborhood Commercial	34
C-3	Regional Destination Center	29
M-1	Industrial	25
R-3	High-Density Residential	20
R-1	Low-Density Residential	14
R-2	Medium-Density Residential	14

#### Summary Legend

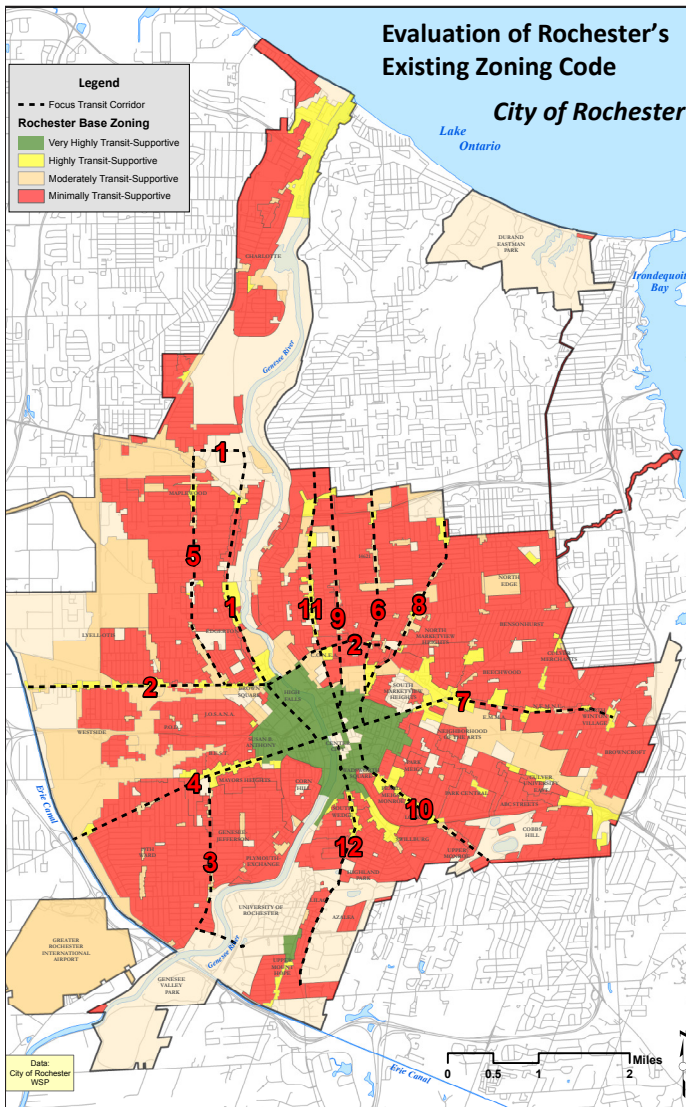
45+	Very Highly Transit-Supportive
35-44	Highly Transit-Supportive
25-34	Moderately Transit-Supportive
<25	Minimally Transit-Supportive

Note: Out of 57 Possible Points

Table ES 2: Summary Table of Zoning Scores

Points:	Why? The criterion in question is:
45+	Zoning district is very highly transit-supportive
35-44	Zoning district is highly transit-supportive
25-34	Zoning district is moderately transit-supportive
Less than 25	Zoning district is minimally transit-supportive

Table ES 1: Final Scoring Ranges for Zoning Districts



Map ES 1: Evaluation of Rochester's Existing Zoning Code

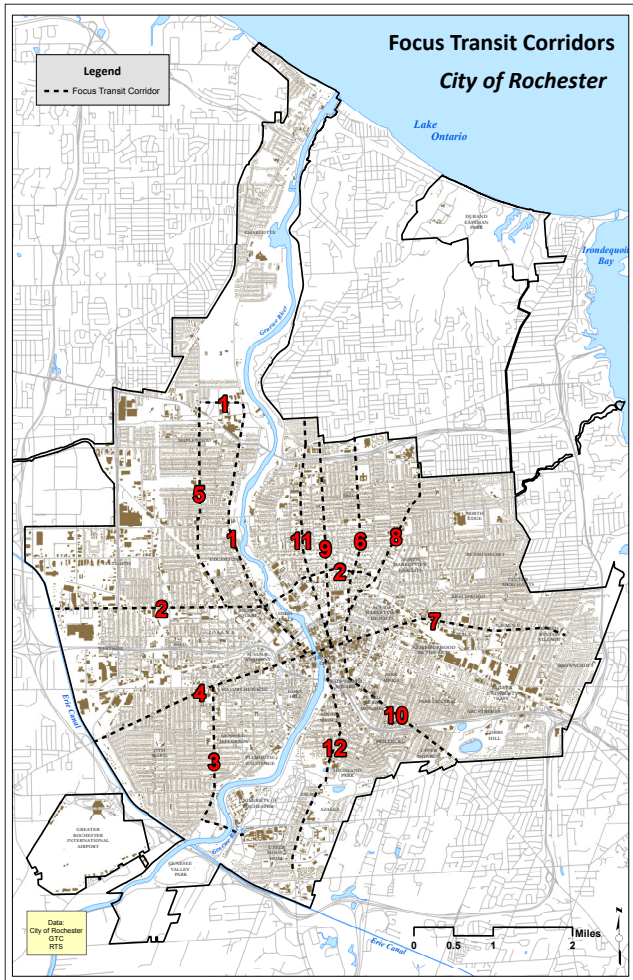
## ANALYZING POTENTIAL TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE CORRIDORS

Twelve corridors were identified for consideration in this study based on how well they align with the transit-supportive elements outlined in this report as well as the new transit network proposed via the Reimagine RTS system redesign plan. Ten of the focus corridors are included because RTS has proposed high-frequency transit service (15-minute headways) along them. Two additional corridors were added based on feedback from the project survey that was available online from February 1 - April 16, 2018 (436 responses), as well as steering committee input. The twelve focus corridors are:

1. Lake Avenue - Downtown to just north of W Ridge Rd (Eastman Business Park)
2. Lyell Avenue/Upper Falls Blvd - City line (Erie Canal) across the river to Portland Ave
3. Genesee Street - W Main St to Strong Memorial Hospital/URMC via Elmwood Ave
4. W. Main Street/Chili Ave - Downtown to City line (Erie Canal)
5. Dewey Avenue - Lyell Ave to W Ridge Rd (Eastman Business Park)
6. Hudson Avenue - Inner Loop to City line (E Ridge Rd)
7. E. Main Street - Downtown to its terminus at Winton Rd
8. Portland Avenue - Inner Loop (via North St) to City line (Rochester General Hospital)
9. Joseph Avenue - Downtown to City line (just north of E Ridge Rd)
10. Monroe Avenue - Downtown to City line (Highland Ave)
11. N. Clinton Avenue - Downtown to City line (just north of E Ridge Rd)
12. South Ave - Downtown to E. Henrietta Road (Monroe Community Hospital)

In conducting the analysis of the twelve focus transit corridors identified for this study, the basic principles of transit-supportive corridors were used as the basis to undertake both a quantitative and a qualitative assessment to gain a better understanding of how transit-supportive each of the corridors is and what the potential for future transit-supportive implementation is.

While high frequency, enhanced transit is a key contributor of encouraging transit supportive



Map ES 2: Focus Transit Corridors Analyzed as Part of this Study

corridors, there are additional quantitative demographic, socio-economic, land use, and transportation related factors that can be analyzed to better understand how transit-supportive a corridor is and can become, and include the following:

1. Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
2. Employment Density
3. Population Density
4. Zero Car Households
5. Transit Commute Share
6. Land Use (Parcels & Buildings)
7. Bicycle & Pedestrian Infrastructure
8. Vacant Land
9. Transit Frequency
10. Zoning
11. Rochester 2034 Mixed-Use Centers

## EVALUATING FOCUS CORRIDORS: DESIRABILITY AND READINESS ASSESSMENT

A Desirability and Readiness Assessment was then undertaken to gauge the level of preparedness of transit-supportive corridors and identify what might be needed to further encourage a transit-supportive environment. The Desirability and Readiness Assessment is a qualitative exercise that summarizes the overall transit-supportive potential by assessing the following:

1. Market Potential - The general market conditions for encouraging transit-supportive development and the ability to attract additional transit ridership.
2. Physical Suitability - The corridor's physical context and character for encouraging transit-supportive development.
3. Plans in Place - Having the appropriate regulatory and policy framework in place to encourage transit-supportive development.
4. Community Input - Community's willingness to accept and desire to encourage transit-supportive development.

From an overall evaluative perspective, most of the study corridors performed well and generally had a strong connection with Downtown, connections to employment centers and areas of higher population densities, and areas with good connections to the bicycle and trails network, as well as multiple potential development sites both along and immediately adjacent to the corridor. A full comparison of all desire and readiness categories is shown on the opposite page. Corridor rankings are as follows:

**HIGH TO VERY HIGH POTENTIAL FOR TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE DEVELOPMENT**

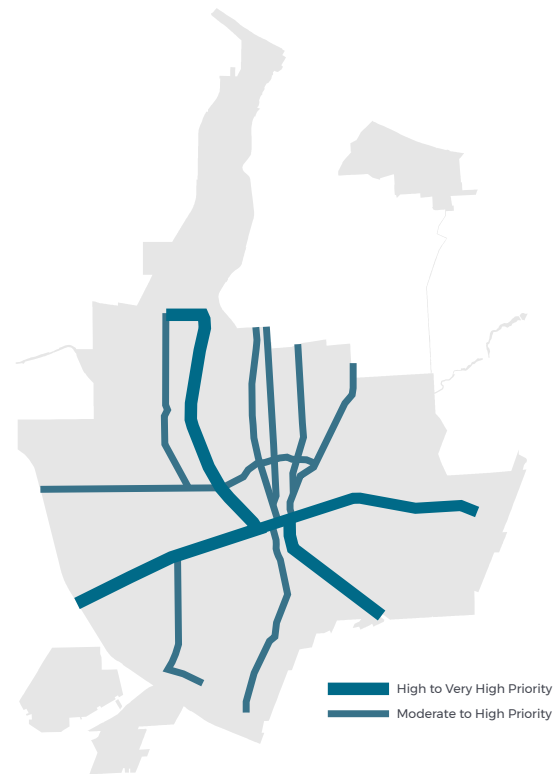
1. E. Main Street (2.32)
2. Monroe Avenue (2.30)
3. W. Main Street (2.28)
4. Lake Avenue (2.22)

**MODERATE TO HIGH POTENTIAL FOR TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE DEVELOPMENT**

5. Joseph Avenue (1.72)
6. N. Clinton Avenue (1.72)
7. Hudson Avenue (1.63)
8. Lyell Avenue/Upper Falls Blvd (1.55)
9. Portland Avenue (1.42)
10. Genesee Street (1.33)
11. Dewey Avenue (1.27)
12. South Avenue (1.17)

**PEER CITY REVIEW**

The report includes a peer review of general transit-supportive practices from across the country and focuses on several cities that have implemented enhanced transit service along one or more corridors. The peer review looks at station area planning and zoning best practices and financing mechanisms being used to implement transit-supportive development.



**RECOMMENDATIONS: HOW TO ENCOURAGE TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE DEVELOPMENT IN ROCHESTER**

Recommendations were developed to provide the City of Rochester with a set of strategies that can be used to create successful transit-supportive corridors. Recommended transit-supportive strategies focus on policy, infrastructure, and financing. Policy strategies center on land use regulations, development policies, parking management tools, transportation policies, and other policy driven recommendations that can help facilitate implementation of transit-supportive corridors. Infrastructure strategies center on public infrastructure, such as streets, public realm and spaces, transit stops, and utilities. Financing strategies center on how transit-supportive elements can be funded and financed by a municipality.



Corridor Name	Market Potential	Physical Suitability	Plans in Place	Community Input		Low	Moderate	High	Very High
LAKE AVENUE	2.20	1.00	2.67	3.00	2.22				
LYELL AVENUE / UPPER FALLS BLVD	1.20	1.67	2.33	1.00	1.55				
GENESEE STREET	1.00	1.67	1.67	1.00	1.33				
WEST MAIN STREET	1.80	1.67	2.67	3.00	2.28				
DEWEY AVENUE	1.40	1.67	1.00	1.00	1.27				
HUDSON AVENUE	1.20	1.00	1.33	3.00	1.63				
EAST MAIN STREET	1.60	1.67	3.00	3.00	2.32				
PORTLAND AVENUE	1.00	2.00	1.67	1.00	1.42				
JOSEPH AVENUE	1.20	2.00	1.67	2.00	1.72				
MONROE AVENUE	1.20	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.30				
NORTH CLINTON AVENUE	1.20	1.67	3.00	1.00	1.72				
SOUTH AVENUE	1.00	1.33	0.33	1.00	1.17				

- **Recommendation #1: Integrate Transit-Supportive Corridors into Comprehensive Plan (and Subsequent Plans)**
  - Plan for mixed-use centers, or nodes, with the highest densities along corridors at major intersections or transit transfer points (31+ units/acre residential density, 15+ employees/acre employment density, 50-100 people/acre sustained activity 12 hours/day)
  - Plan for transit-supportive mix of uses and densities along transit corridors and just outside of the mixed-use centers. (16-30 units/acre residential density, 10-15 employees/acre employment density, 25-50 people/acre sustained activity 12 hours/day)
  - Plan for connecting adjacent residential neighborhoods with transit-supportive corridors and mixed use centers by focusing on walkability and expanding the transit catchment area. (5-16 units/acre residential density)
  - Coordinate transit-supportive development planning in the City of Rochester with adjacent municipalities and regional planning agencies, including adjacent towns, RTS, and other regional agencies and stakeholders as appropriate.
- **Recommendation #2: Update the City's Zoning Code to Support More Mixed-Use, Transit-Supportive Development**
  - Revise the City's zoning code to allow greater mix of uses and higher densities along transit corridors and around mixed use centers.
  - Create City-wide Unified Development Ordinance/Code that captures multiple city-wide policies (i.e., zoning, subdivision, parking, as well as public realm and street requirements) into one unified code that can streamline and coordinate the development process and better define the relationship between land use and transportation planning.
- **Recommendation #3: Introduce Progressive Parking Strategies and Management Tools**
  - Eliminate or reduce vehicular parking minimums and provide stricter provisions for parking placement and access when parking is provided near transit supportive corridors and mixed use centers.
  - Establish requirements for bicycle parking code-wide that are not associated with vehicle parking percentages.
  - Require that parking be placed at the rear of buildings in all zoning districts (including planned development districts), or at the side of buildings at the very least; never in front yards or closer to the building frontage of a side yard.
- Consider creating parking management districts that would provide municipally-owned and managed, shared-use parking lots whose income could be re-invested in the surrounding area.
- Consider requiring developments of a certain size to develop and implement a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policy.
- **Recommendation #4: Encourage Strategic Infill Development**
  - Put greater focus on encouraging mixed-use, transit supportive infill development along focus corridors, especially for city-owned vacant land. Aggressively market city-owned vacant lots along these corridors.
  - Award extra points on City issued RFPs for land sale, gap financing, or other city support to help prioritize mixed use and higher density development that is proposed within a ¼ mile of transit-supportive focus corridors or mixed use centers, especially projects that include affordable housing.
- **Recommendation #5: Proactively Implement and Evolve Complete Streets along Transit Corridors**
  - Build on the City's existing Complete Streets policy to include emerging multimodal transportation options, technologies, and curbside management best practices.
  - Review focus corridors for opportunities to improve complete streets in support of transit and multimodal transportation goals.
  - Incorporate enhanced transit stops or mobility hubs at major points where bus transfers or other multimodal activity is anticipated to be greatest.
- **Recommendation #6: Prioritize Multimodal Capital Improvements Along Transit Corridors**
  - Invest in high-quality, pedestrian infrastructure and public realm improvements along focus corridors
  - Invest in high-quality bicycle infrastructure and parking along focus corridors
  - Invest in enhanced transit stops, integrated transportation facilities, and mobility hubs along focus corridors
- **Recommendation #7: Develop Transit-Supportive Development Incentive and Financing Tools**
  - Work with partners to create and leverage financing mechanisms that make it easier to build mixed-use, transit supportive developments along transit corridors.



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