III. The Rochester Atlas

OVERVIEW

> *"Rochester's housing market is far healthier than it was in the late 70s, in part because of steps the City has taken and in part because of national forces that bolstered demand for housing in the City."*[6]
>
> *"The strong local economy provides excellent support for the regional housing market, and activity downtown has a significant positive impact on housing markets in the City."*[7]

Taken together, these quotes from the 1988 Housing Market Study represent some striking similarities and differences compared to Rochester today. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the City seemed poised to follow in the footsteps of other cities in the country that found a successful mix of initiatives to promote a greater interest in city living. Today, that positive outlook for the City remains, emanating, in part, from a strong hint of private demand concentrated around and near downtown Rochester. Despite this optimism, there are widespread perceptions that positive change has been extremely slow in being realized.

One of the major factors of this slow-change relates to economic challenges not just in Rochester, but throughout Upstate New York. Issues pertaining to jobs and the changing regional economic base underlie many conversations about the future of the City and its neighborhoods. In 2005, Monroe County lost almost 12,000 jobs, three times more than the number of jobs gained. Eastman Kodak, once an employer of 61,000 local employees, now has 12,500. The impact of these losses cannot be understated. Decades of decline in the manufacturing base have diminished local incomes, increased poverty, contributed to a weakened housing market evidenced by foreclosures and vacancies, and greatly impacted local confidence.

It does not help that modest regional population growth around Rochester – 6.9 percent in Monroe County[8] between 1990 and 2000 – is sapping the City of residents; the City lost 5.1 percent of its population during the same time frame. In 2005, sales in Rochester represented only 22 percent of the County-wide total of 8,806.[9] Further, 1,133 building permits were issued for new home construction in Monroe County (excluding Rochester) in 2005 and just 33 in the City.[10] This represents three percent of the total and speaks to a regional dynamic that has clearly put the City at a competitive disadvantage.

The market assessment completed by Zimmerman / Volk Associates, Inc. (ZVA) addresses the question of market potential based upon these regional growth dynamics. The market potential, however, is not self-fulfilling. It is important to build a strategy from a true understanding of the City's characteristics over time. Where have homeownership rates fallen? Where has vacancy increased? Where has the housing market improved and declined? Where are the primary amenities that make neighborhoods attractive and livable?

The "Rochester Atlas" is an effort to see the City through different lenses. It represents a snapshot in time, combining socio-economic and physical analysis in a series of illustrations. The maps and the information contained therein set the stage for subsequent analyses of neighborhood health, market potential and the housing system.

Figure 1. Rochester located within Monroe County, New York. Source: Monroe County

THE GEOGRAPHIES OF ROCHESTER

Regional Context

Rochester is centrally located within Monroe County, planted within the Upstate New York region between Buffalo and Syracuse. Some of the data collected and presented in this analysis includes Monroe County for comparison purposes, although we recognize that the urbanized area has extended into neighboring counties.

Politically, the City is impacted by the actions of the County Legislature and State Senate and Assembly Districts that cross neighborhood and City boundaries. Three State Senators and five State Assembly Members represent Rochester.

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[6] Rochester Housing Market Study, February, 1988.

[7] Ibid.

[8] The 6.9 percent growth in Monroe County excludes Rochester.

[9] "2005 Real Estate Activity Report," Greater Rochester Association of REALTORS, Inc.

[10] "Local Economic Impact," Rochester Home Builder's Association.

Rochester Neighborhoods

1. Charlotte
2. Maplewood
3. Lyell-Otis
4. Edgerton
5. U.N.I.T.
6. P.O.D.
7. J.O.S.A.N.A.
8. Brown Square
9. Susan B. Anthony
10. B.E.S.T.
11. 19th Ward
12. Mayor's Heights
13. Cornhill
14. Genesee-Jefferson
15. Plymouth-Exchange
16. 14621
17. Northland-Lyceum
18. Upper Falls
19. North Marketview Heights
20. South Marketview Heights
21. Homestead Heights
22. Beechwood
23. Culver-Winton
24. Browncroft
25. Atlantic-University
26. East Ave
27. Park Ave
28. Pearl-Meigs-Monroe
29. South Wedge
30. Ellwanger-Barry
31. Swillburg
32. Upper Monroe
33. Cobbs Hill
34. Highland
35. Strong
36. Central Business District

Figure 2. Rochester's neighborhoods, as defined by the City. Source: City of Rochester

City Neighborhoods

The neighborhoods represent the most fundamental geography through which residents see their City. Using information from the City, 35 different neighborhoods were mapped not including downtown Rochester, which encompasses Grove Place and a mix of emerging communities. At times, these neighborhood boundaries (and names) may not match local perception. Many local residents made it very clear that the neighborhood names themselves resonated more than their specific boundaries.

Understanding the City through the prism of its neighborhoods is an underlying goal of this Study. Therefore, these neighborhood boundaries are layered over the mapping and analysis contained herein.

City Neighborhoods *(listed alphabetically)*

- Atlantic-University
- Beechwood
- Bullshead Neighbors Eager to Stand Together (B.E.S.T.)
- Browncroft
- Brown Square
- Central Business District*
- Charlotte
- Cobbs Hill
- Cornhill
- Culver-Winton
- East Ave
- Edgerton
- Ellwanger-Barry
- Genesee-Jefferson
- Highland
- Homestead Heights
- Jay Orchard Street Area Neighborhood Association (J.O.S.A.N.A.)
- Lyell-Otis
- Maplewood
- Mayor's Heights
- Northland-Lyceum
- North Marketview Heights
- Park Ave
- Pearl-Meigs-Monroe
- Plymouth-Exchange
- People of Dutchtown (P.O.D.)
- South Marketview Heights
- South Wedge
- Strong
- Susan B. Anthony
- Swillburg
- United Neighbors Involved Together (U.N.I.T.)
- Upper Falls
- Upper Monroe
- 19th Ward
- 14621

* The Central Business District includes 13 neighborhoods:
-- Cascade District
-- Convention District
-- Cornhill
-- East End / Upper East End
-- Four Corners
-- Grove Place
-- High Falls
-- Main and Clinton
-- Manhattan Square
-- Monroe / Alexander
-- St. Joseph's Park
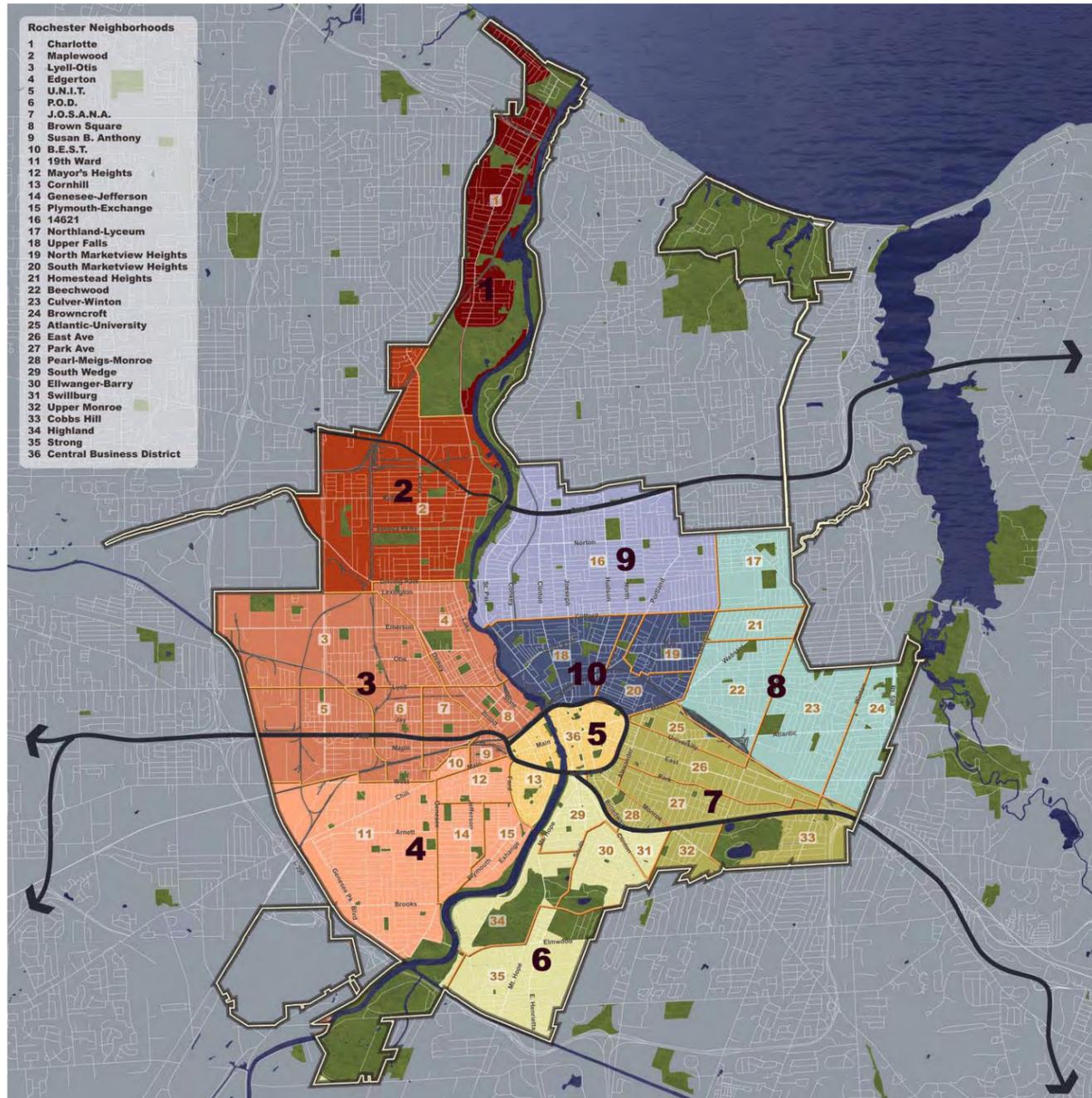-- St. Paul Quarter
-- Washington Square

Rochester Neighborhoods
1   Charlotte
2   Maplewood
3   Lyell-Otis
4   Edgerton
5   U.N.I.T.
6   P.O.D.
7   J.O.S.A.N.A.
8   Brown Square
9   Susan B. Anthony
10 B.E.S.T.
11 19th Ward
12 Mayor's Heights
13 Cornhill
14 Genesee-Jefferson
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26 East Ave
27 Park Ave
28 Pearl-Meigs-Monroe
29 South Wedge
30 Ellwanger-Barry
31 Swillburg
32 Upper Monroe
33 Cobbs Hill
34 Highland
35 Strong
36 Central Business District

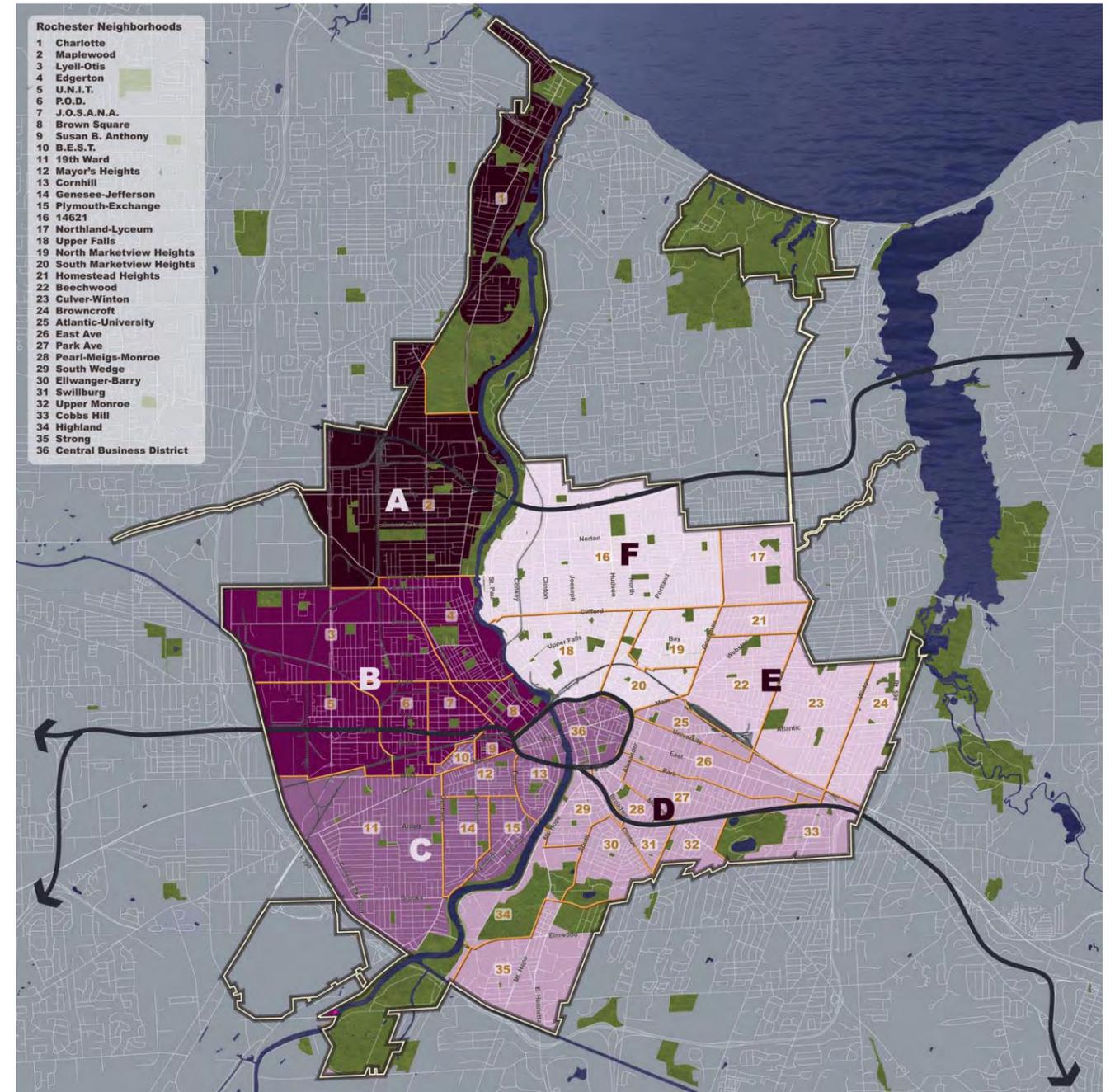*Figure 3. Sectors, Source: City of Rochester*

Figure 4. Neighborhood Empowerment Team (NET) Areas, Source: City of Rochester

Sectors

Through the Neighbors Building Neighborhoods (NBN) program, the City is sliced into 10 sectors, each of which contains one or more neighborhoods. The Sectors were created to organize neighborhood planning activities and City implementation of those plans. Extensive marketing, including banners, as well as monthly Sector meetings have imprinted the process onto the minds of residents and neighborhood groups. During the interviews conducted for this Study, those interviewed referred to both the neighborhood in which they live and the corresponding NBN Sector number regardless of how they felt about the NBN program.

NET Areas

The Neighborhood Empowerment Team (NET) program is organized around six areas that include one or more Sectors. As described later in this analysis, NET areas were created as interfaces between City services, such as police protection and code inspections, and community organizations. Each NET area has a different administrator. The majority of residents and stakeholders interviewed during this Study could identify which NET area serves them.
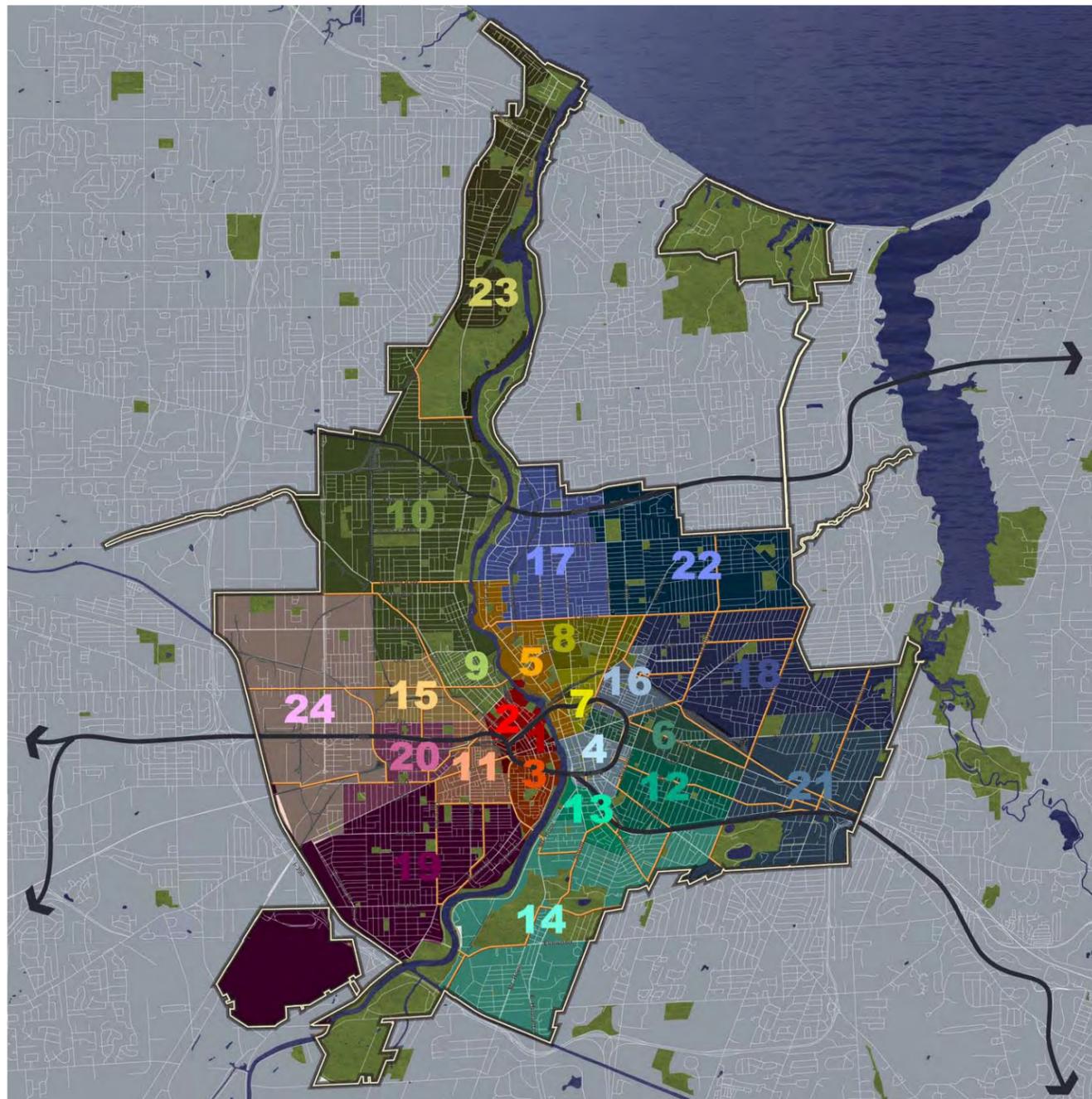
Figure 5. Assessment Districts Map, Source: City of Rochester

Rochester Neighborhoods

1 Charlotte
2 Maplewood
3 Lyell-Otis
4 Edgerton
5 U.N.I.T.
6 P.O.D.
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30 Ellwanger-Barry
31 Swillburg
32 Upper Monroe
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34 Highland
35 Strong
36 Central Business District

Figure 6. Census Block Groups, Source: U.S. Census 2000

Assessment Districts

There are 24 Assessment Districts in the City. These districts are used primarily for the collection of sales and other data both within the City and for the region. These boundaries do not conform to neighborhood boundaries and are not typically recognized by residents or neighborhood organizations. These Assessment Districts are based upon an antiquated political wards system, which was dispensed with in the late 1970s. The system is still utilized by the Greater Rochester Association of Realtors.

Census Block Groups

There are 239 Census Block Groups in the City corresponding with 83 different Census Tracts. Recognizing that many neighborhoods in the City experience variations within their designated boundaries, this Analysis maps the majority of data at the Block Group level. Neighborhood boundaries are superimposed onto these maps to provide reference.

THE PEOPLE OF ROCHESTER

A Note on Data Sources

This section reviews the demographic trends of the City. Census data over time was used to provide a baseline, and, where possible, Claritas projections were used to determine the current day statistics. All maps were compiled using block group data. This was done to account for the variations that often occur within neighborhoods that are often not visible at the scale of census tracts. To assist in reading the maps, neighborhood outlines and names appear on every map.

Population Change

The trend of population loss has been recognized since the 1970s when the City had its single worst decade, losing approximately 55,000 people. Since then, the 1980s and 90s saw losses of about 10,000 people a decade. As noted earlier, the losses in Rochester only helped to fuel new homes and growth in Monroe County, which gained over 30,000 people between 1990 and 2000.

Of course, to identify Rochester as a city in decline is too broad. Some of Rochester's neighborhoods are in fact declining, while others have remained stable or even gained population. Between 1990 and 2000, Brown Square, Edgerton, 14621, portions of J.O.S.A.N.A., and Genesee-Jefferson, Plymouth Exchange and Marketview Heights all lost between 10 percent and 24 percent of their population. There is even indication of losses in Culver-Winton, Browncroft, Cobbs Hill and Strong, although much of this loss is due to declining household size as opposed to a loss of households. The greatest population losses of over 25 percent are in portions of J.O.S.A.N.A., Atlantic-University, and Beechwood.

At the same time, Charlotte, South Wedge, Corn Hill, and portions of Marketview Heights and U.N.I.T. all gained population of between 11 percent and 25 percent. The largest gains were centered in downtown Rochester and East Avenue / Atlantic-University with growth of over 51 percent.

In reviewing the data, a few neighborhoods – North and South Marketview Heights and Maplewood – are unique in that they represent both extreme losses and gains within close proximity of one another. South Marketview Heights, particularly near the Public Market, exhibited noticeable gains due, in part, to recent investment in the area, which has resulted in new developments. North Marketview Heights, on the other hand, is losing population south of Clifford Avenue. Maplewood's extreme gains and losses are centered around Ridge Road, with losses noticeable east of Dewey Avenue and further west toward the City line.
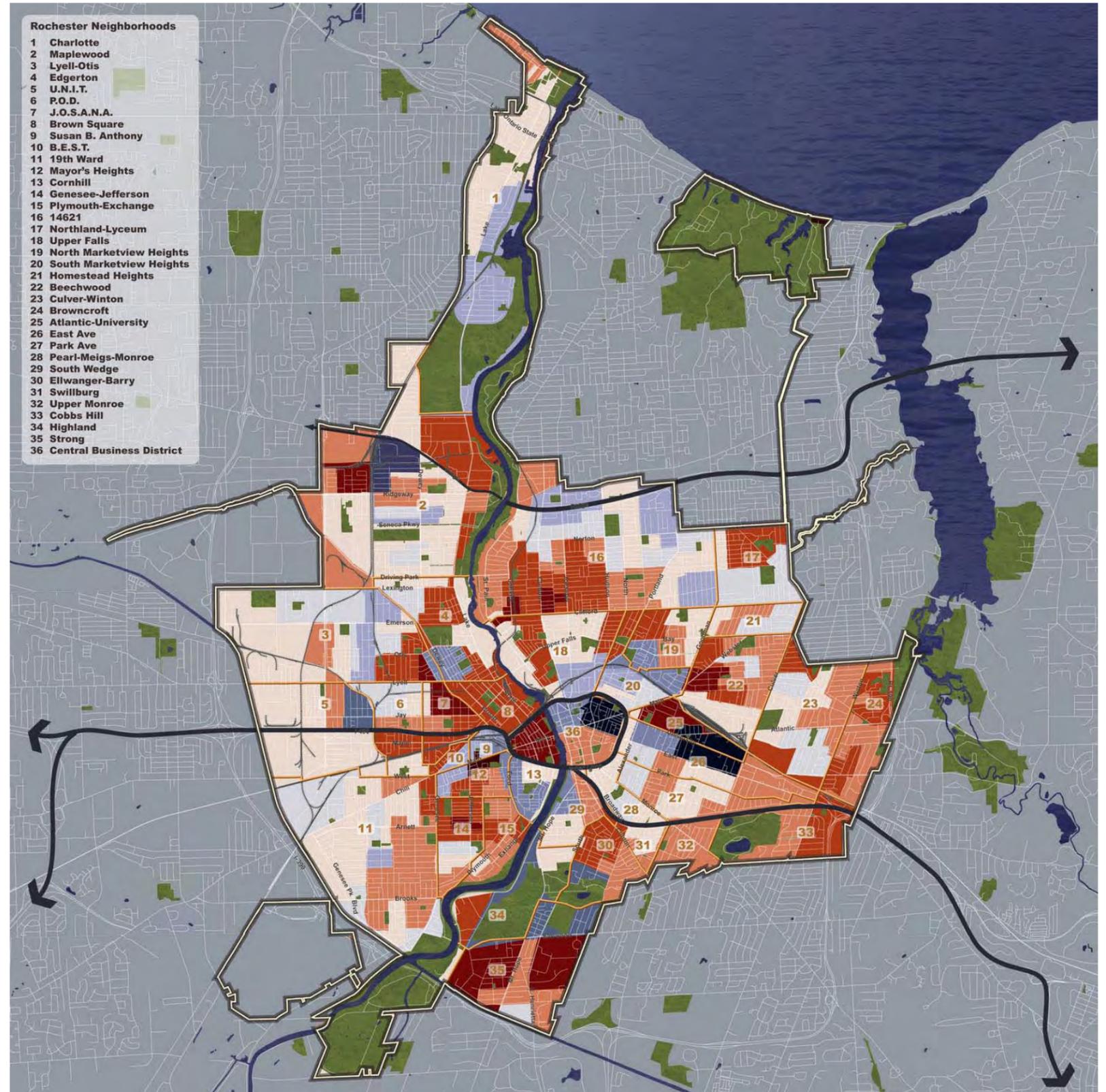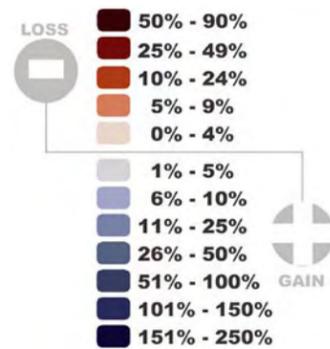

Rochester Neighborhoods

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30 Ellwanger-Barry
31 Swillburg
32 Upper Monroe
33 Cobbs Hill
34 Highland
35 Strong
36 Central Business District

LOSS
50% - 90%
25% - 49%
10% - 24%
5% - 9%
0% - 4%

1% - 5%
6% - 10%
11% - 25%
26% - 50%
51% - 100%
101% - 150%
151% - 250%
GAIN

Firgure 7. Percent Change in Population, 1990-2000. Source: U.S. Census, 1990 and 2000

Rochester Neighborhoods

1   Charlotte
2   Maplewood
3   Lyell-Otis
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5   U.N.I.T.
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30 Ellwanger-Barry
31 Swillburg
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33 Cobbs Hill
34 Highland
35 Strong
36 Central Business District

0% - 5%
6% - 10%
11% - 15%
16% - 20%
21% +

Figure 8. Percent of Population Foreign Born Residents, 2000. Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Overall, the sharpest contrasts in the City are located in two areas:

1) Edgerton, where the area south of Pae Tec Park shows population increases which stand in sharp contrast to the losses of over 25 percent just across Broad Street into Lyell-Otis; and,

2) Atlantic-University and East Avenue where some of the City's most significant population gains and most dramatic population losses are separated only by University Avenue near Main Street.

It should be noted that County trends in areas immediately adjacent to Rochester share many of these characteristics but to a lesser extent. The largest growth along the periphery is in Rochester's southern end in Brighton. The majority of the townships immediately bordering Rochester, however, exhibited minor or negligible growth / losses over the same time frame. Irondequoit is the outlier, experiencing both noticeable gains (near the Genesee River and Lake Ontario) and losses (around Ridge Road).

Overall, the population losses appear to be more mild than other Upstate cities. However, Rochester's population losses have been off-set, somewhat, by a large and increasing number of foreign born residents as well as Latino families. For instance, in 2000, small pockets of the City, located from 14621 to Lyell-Otis to the South Wedge, contained over 21 percent foreign born residents. The University of Rochester is also a key attraction, functioning to increase the percentage of foreign born residents.

Unfortunately, while Rochester is gaining immigrants, the young and educated residents of all ethnicities are leaving in large numbers. The "Brain Drain" is a common problem among cities and particularly acute in Upstate New York, which lost more than 25 percent of its people aged between 25 and 34 between 1990 and 2004.[11] This is troubling when the ratio of educational institutions to residents in Upstate New York is 24 percent higher than the national average.[12] In total, the Rochester MSA (which includes areas beyond Monroe County) ranks 191st out of 276 national MSAs in terms of net migration of 25 to 39 year old college educated adults between 1995 and 2000.[13] Further, only one in six graduates of the University of Rochester and the Rochester Institute of Technology remain in the City one year after graduation.[14] Of Rochester's residents, 7.6 percent of the population (17,000 persons), reported being in college or graduate school in 2000.[15]

[11] "Flight of Young Adults is Causing Alarm Upstate." The New York Times. June 13, 2006.

[12] Pendall, Rolf. "Transition and Renewal: The Emergence of a Diverse Upstate Economy." The Brookings Institution. January, 2004.

[13] U.S. Census, 2000.

[14] McArdle, Nancy. "The Changing Face of Rochester: A Demographic, Housing, and Socio-Economic Portrait." December, 2003.

[15] Ibid.

Figure 9. Estimated Percent Change in Population, 2000-2006. Source: Claritas
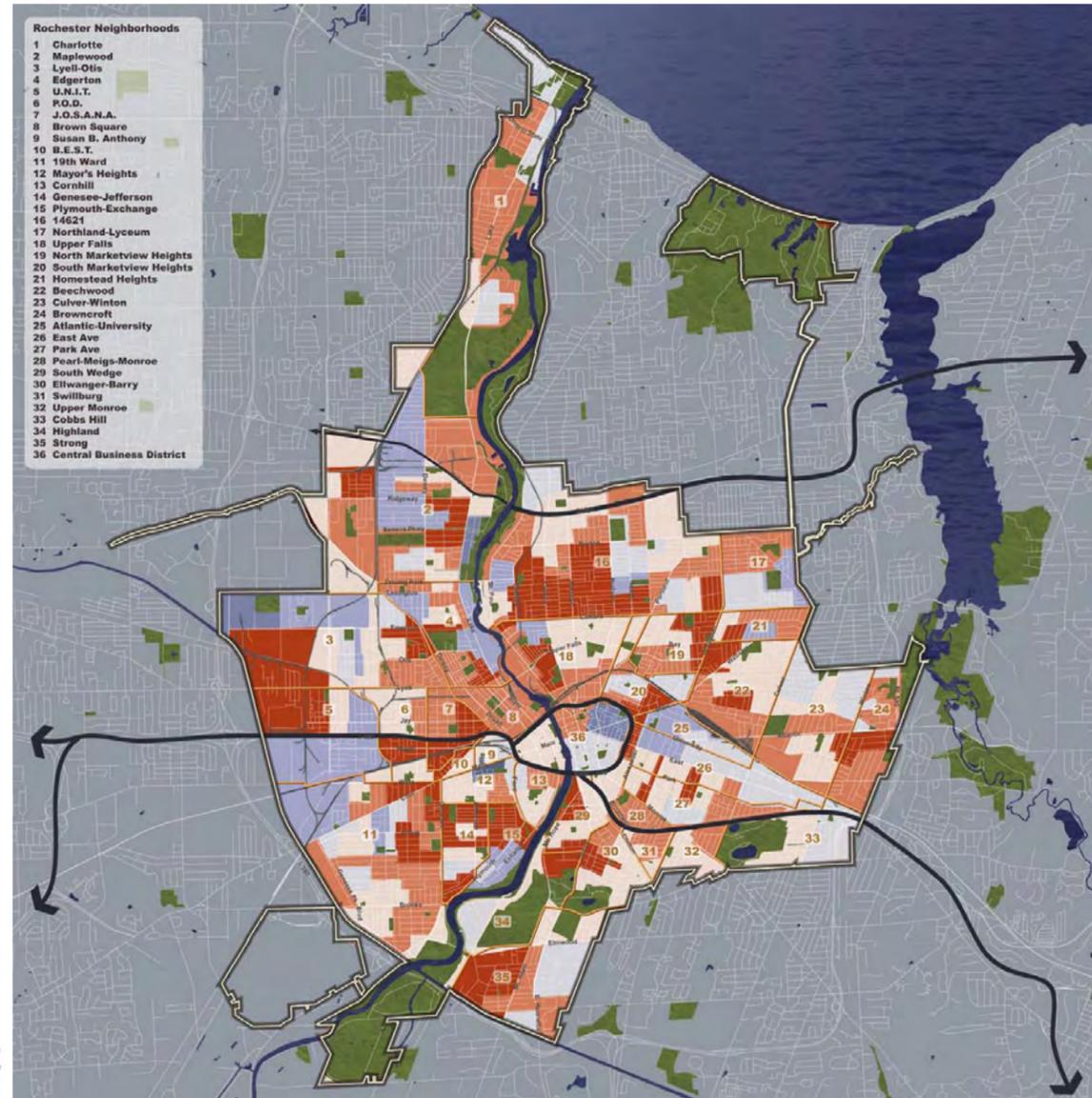

Figure 10. Estimated Percent Change in Population, 2006-2011. Source: Claritas

Estimates from Claritas for 2000-2006 indicate a reinforcement of previous trends following similar boundaries. Portions of Mayor's Heights are estimated to have grown substantially, but this accounts for the recently completed Anthony Square development. Otherwise Claritas data shows losses of between five percent and nine percent impacting Charlotte and Maplewood stretching down through the 19th Ward. 14621, Genesee-Jefferson, J.O.S.A.N.A., Edgerton, Lyell-Otis, B.E.S.T. and P.O.D. are all estimated to have experienced significant population losses. Overall, the City is estimated to now have a population of 210,578, or a 4.2 percent loss from 2000.

Extending the projections to 2011, continued population loss is estimated with concentrations in Brown Square, J.O.S.A.N.A., Genesee-Jefferson, and 14621. By 2011, Rochester is estimated to lose another 3.3 percent of its population, resulting in a population of 203,585 residents. This is a seven percent loss from 2000, greater than the 5.1 percent loss between 1990 and 2000. Meanwhile, the County is slowly continuing to expand in population, up two percent between 2000 and 2006 and three percent between 2000 and 2011. The total population estimates in Monroe County including the City data since 2000 amounts to zero net growth.
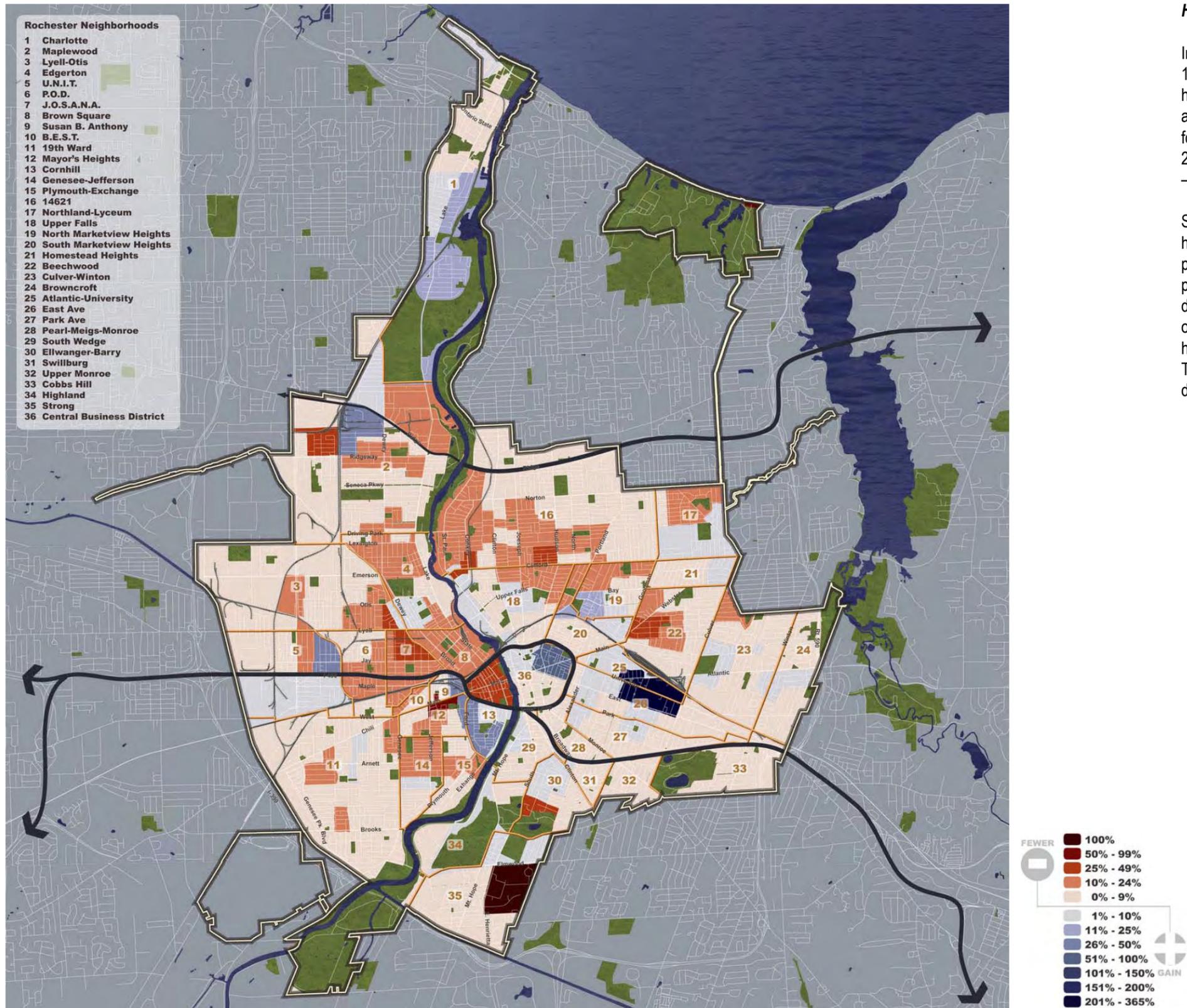
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35 Strong
36 Central Business District

Figure 11. Percent Change in Number of Households, 1990-2000. Source: U.S. Census, 1990 and 2000

Household Change

In 2000, there were 88,999 households in the City, a five percent decrease from 1990. The County, excluding City data, gained 10.8 percent or approximately 19,000 households. The majority of the City in that time frame exhibited modest decreases, and in some cases increases, in households. A gain of more than 10 percent was found in Charlotte and Corn Hill where the population increased between 1990 and 2000 as well. The highest gains correspond to the areas of highest population growth – in downtown around Grove Place and in the Atlantic-University neighborhood.

Significant losses in households of over 10 percent correspond with the areas of heaviest population losses – Brown Square, Edgerton, J.O.S.A.N.A., 14621 and parts of Marketview Heights, Beechwood and Maplewood. Other areas that exhibited population losses like Cobbs Hill show very few losses in households, which indicates declining household size. The largest losses in households (above 50 percent) are outliers. The redevelopment in Mayor's Heights culminating in Anthony Square shows heavy household loss due to the demolition of a former public housing development. The other area with heavy losses in households is located in the Strong neighborhood due primarily to the closing of a psychiatric center.

One- and two-person households account for 64 percent of the households in the City, which is comparable to other cities nationally. One- and two-person households account for 59 percent of the households in the County, not including the City, which is just one percentage point higher than the national rate of 58 percent. Where Rochester is unique is in the distribution of these households. The overwhelming majority of these are concentrated in the southeast and in downtown Rochester. With the exception of portions of Swillburg, Ellwanger-Barry and the South Wedge neighborhoods, the entire southeast is composed of over 75 percent one- and two-person households with some block groups as high as 95 percent. This trend was reinforced through interviews that indicated a high number of students and young couples in the area due to the University. Corn Hill is the other neighborhood comprised of over 81 percent one- and two-person households. The rest of the City is composed of less than 60 percent of these households with much of the northeast far below 50 percent.
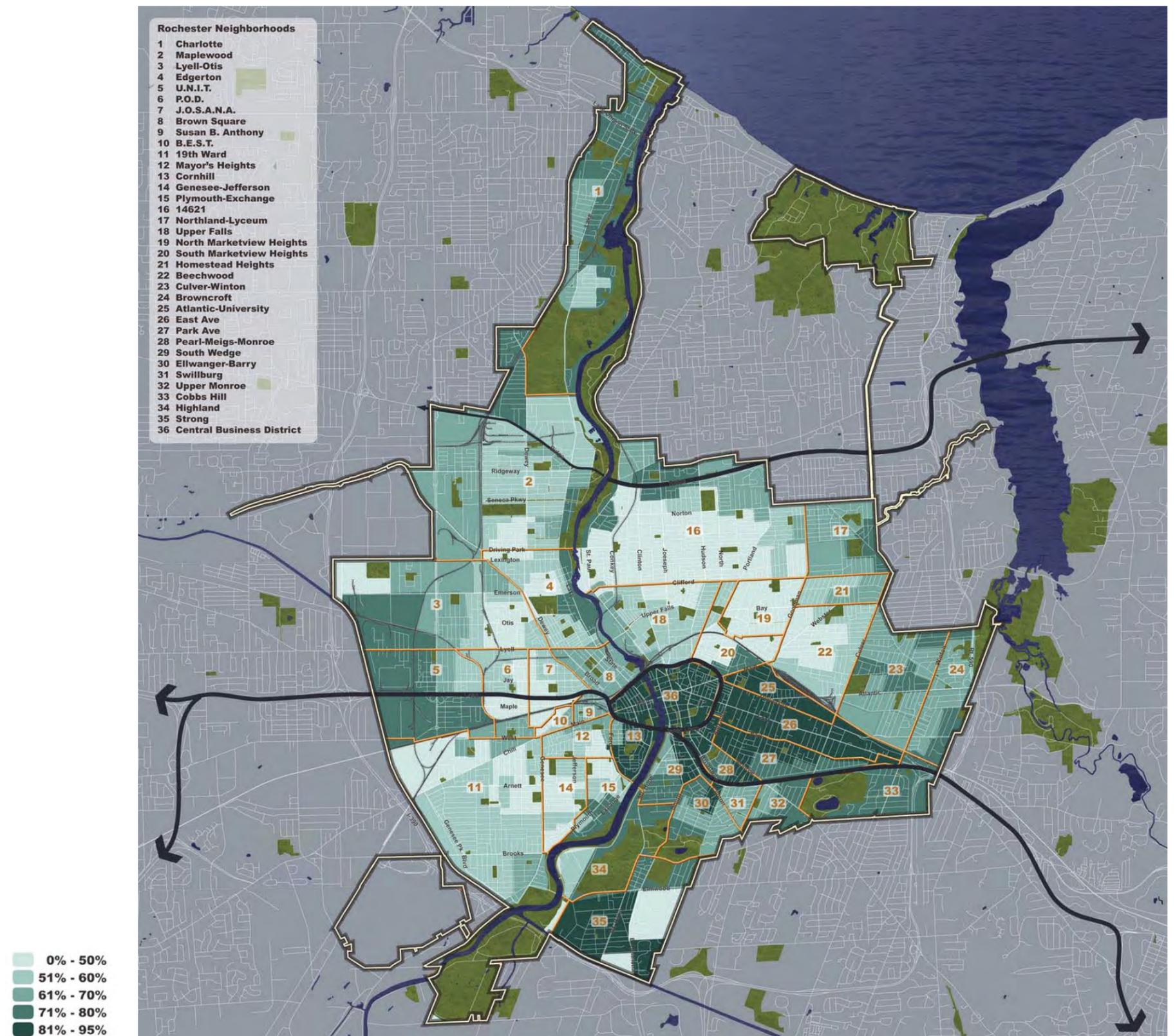

Rochester Neighborhoods

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29. South Wedge
30. Ellwanger-Barry
31. Swillburg
32. Upper Monroe
33. Cobbs Hill
34. Highland
35. Strong
36. Central Business District

- 0% - 50%
- 51% - 60%
- 61% - 70%
- 71% - 80%
- 81% - 95%

Figure 12. Percent of 1- and 2-Person Households, 2000. Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Rochester Neighborhoods

1 Charlotte
2 Maplewood
3 Lyell-Otis
4 Edgerton
5 U.N.I.T.
6 P.O.D.
7 J.O.S.A.N.A.
8 Brown Square
9 Susan B. Anthony
10 B.E.S.T.
11 19th Ward
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30 Ellwanger-Barry
31 Swillburg
32 Upper Monroe
33 Cobbs Hill
34 Highland
35 Strong
36 Central Business District

In 2006, Claritas estimates indicate another 3.6 percent loss in households city-wide. The main losses are concentrated in "islands" surrounded by areas with negligible change. These islands are located in Edgerton, Lyell-Otis, 14621, Beechwood, Upper Falls, and even the South Wedge (due mostly to the planned development of River Park Commons by Conifer.) The heaviest concentration of losses stretch across the Genesee-Jefferson and Plymouth Exchange neighborhoods and extends northward into J.O.S.A.N.A, B.E.S.T. and P.O.D.

In 2006, there are 85,572 estimated households in Rochester, 64.5 percent of which are one- and two-person households concentrated in similar locations as in 2000. The notable exceptions to this trend are estimated decreases in one- and two-person households in Strong and the South Wedge with increases in Maplewood around Ridge Road west of Dewey Avenue. Overall, however, national trends indicate that the numbers of one- and two-person households will increase in the City as the baby boomers retire and move in-town and as younger residents wait longer to have children.

Projections for 2011 reinforce the existing trends with household losses estimated in 14621, Plymouth Exchange / Genesee-Jefferson around Columbia Avenue, from the inner loop west and north up to Emerson Street, and along I-490. In 2011, the number of households in the City is projected to drop by another 3.3 percent to 82,725. Meanwhile, between 2000 and 2011, the County is projected to have gained over 10,000 households representing a 5.3 percent increase.[16]

FEWER

50% - 100%
25% - 49%
10% - 24%
0% - 9%
1% - 10%
11% - 13%
14% - 25%
25% - 50%

MORE

[16] Excluding Rochester data.

Figure 13. Estimated Percent Change in Number of Households, 2000-2006. Source: Claritas
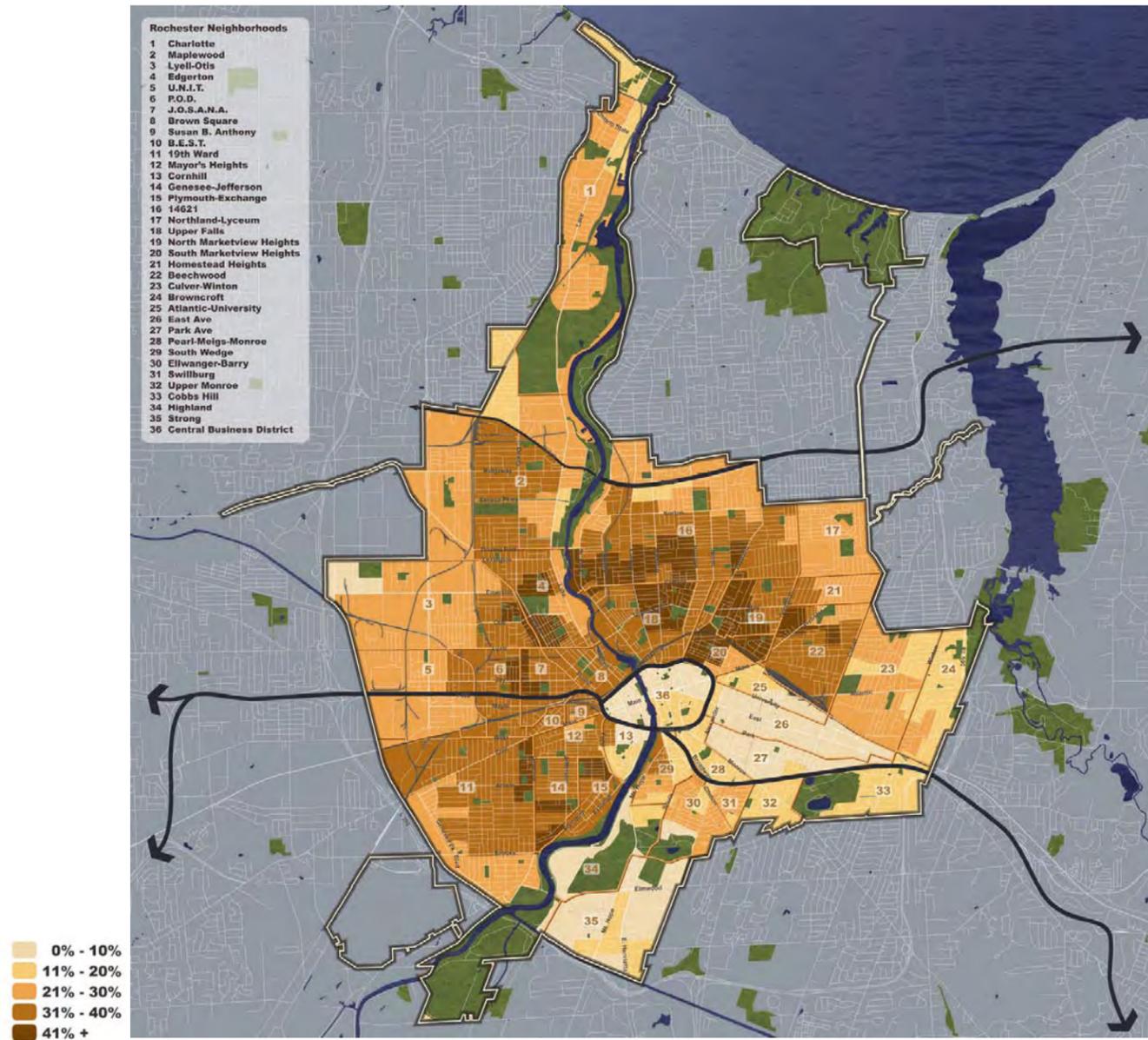
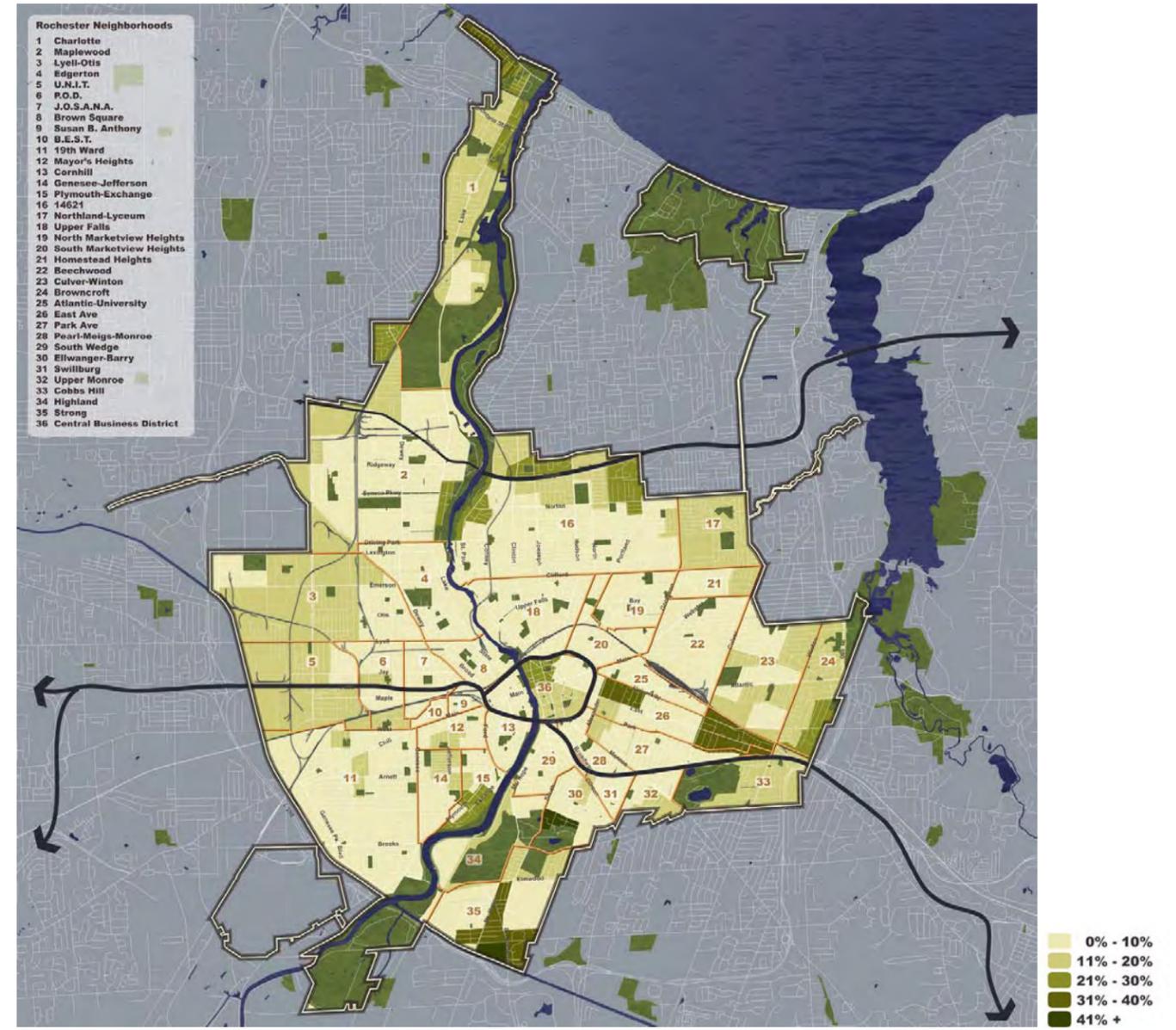Figure 14. Percent of Population Under 18, 2000. Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Figure 15. Percent of Population Over 65, 2000. Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Age & Family Structure

Twenty-eight percent (28%) of Rochester's population is under the age of 18, compared to Monroe County's rate of 25 percent not including the City's population. The City's youth population is concentrated in the area spanning from the northeast westward around downtown to the Genesse River. In 2000, all of these areas comprised over 40 percent of residents under the age of 18, with the highest percentage in Upper Falls at 46 percent. The lowest proportion of residents under 18 is in downtown and the East End neighborhood (roughly three percent). Estimates for 2006 indicate that changes in the proportion of residents under the age of 18 are underway both in the area west and northeast of downtown (an estimated 15 percent decrease) and in the East End (an estimated 15 percent increase).

In 2000, 10 percent of Rochester was composed of residents over the age of 65. This is a two percent decrease from 1990. Over the same time frame, Monroe County gained 12,708 residents over the age of 65, excluding Rochester data. Less than two percent of residents of the Highland neighborhood and of downtown west of the River are over 65. At the other extreme, more than 63 percent of residents in small pockets of the Ellwanger-Barry and Strong neighborhoods are over the age of 65. These population spikes of residents over the age of 65 are almost always due to a large assisted living or age restricted development.
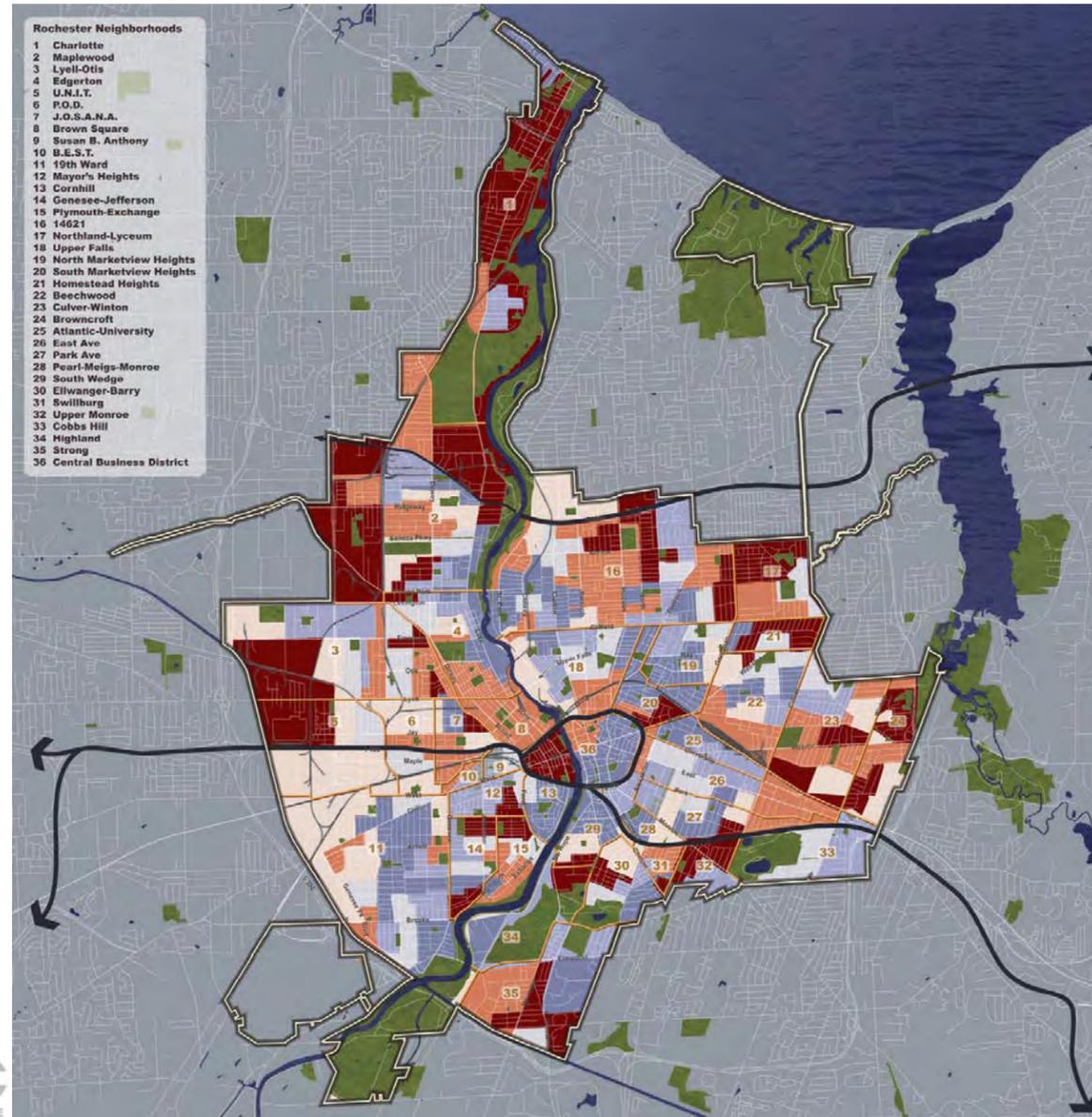
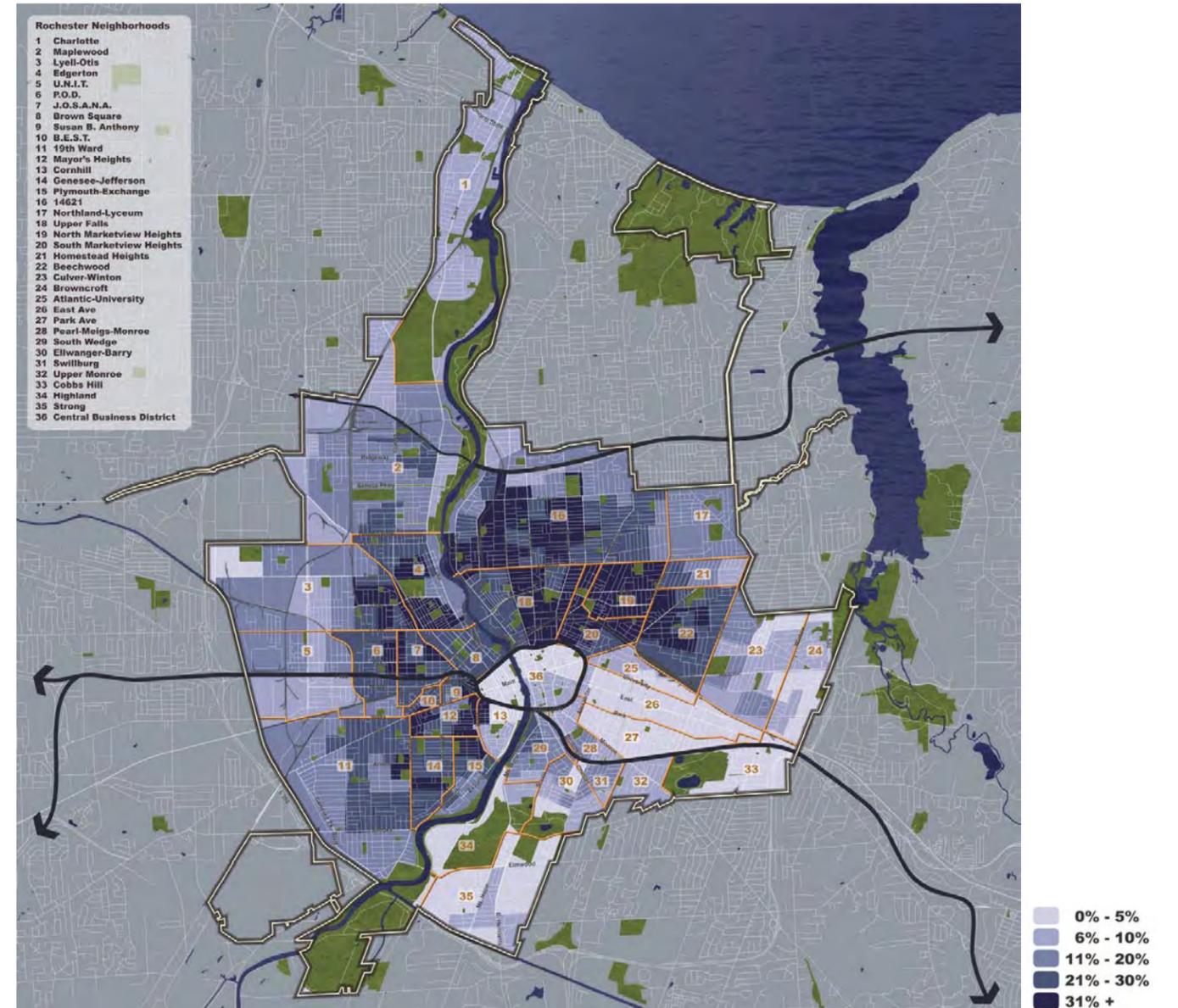Figure 16. Estimated Change in Population Over 65, 2000-2006. Source: Claritas

Figure 17. Percent of Households Composed of Single Female with Children, 2000. Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Estimates for 2006 illustrate a 'reverse crescent' in terms of where the percentages of residents over the age of 65 have increased. The proportion of seniors in 14621 near the River, Marketview Heights around the Public Market, downtown, South Wedge, Corn Hill and the 19th Ward are all estimated to have increased by over 11 percent.

In 2000, 54 percent of households with children were headed by a single female. In some locations, notably Upper Falls and within North and South Marketview Heights, over 40 percent of all households are single women with children. Approximately a third of

all households in 14621, Beechwood, Edgerton, J.O.S.A.N.A., and Plymouth Exchange are single women with children. These extremely high proportions add significant strain to neighborhoods already struggling with social and economic issues, as single female-headed households with children are more likely to be in poverty than any other household type.

The share of households in the City composed of single women with children was 18.4 percent in 2000, up from 15.5 percent in 1990. Since 2000, estimates indicate that this rate has decreased somewhat to 16 percent of all households.

Income & Poverty

Though the County's median household income reported by the 2000 Census was $44,891, above the national average of $41,994, the median household income reported for Rochester was $27,123. This represents a drop from 1990, which was echoed in the surrounding suburbs during the same time frame. The highest medians in the City were in Browncroft at around $92,000 and in Cobbs Hill of just over $70,000. East Avenue and Park Avenue have medians close to $60,000 and portions of Maplewood, the 19th Ward and Charlotte exceeded $50,000. Some of those same neighborhoods also exhibit very low median incomes, including the 19th Ward where north of Chili Avenue one of the lowest City median incomes, roughly $12,000, was found. The same is true of Ellwanger-Barry and Swillburg around Goodman Street. These median incomes reflect those common in Upper Falls and Edgerton. The lowest City median incomes were found in downtown Rochester owing to the presence of large, subsidized housing projects that encompass the majority of households in those areas. Overall, the average income in Rochester is 67 percent of that of the suburbs.[17]

The very low incomes have caused a related increase in poverty rates within many neighborhoods. The poverty rate rose from 23.5 percent in 1990 to 25.9 percent in 2000. More striking are the facts that in 2000, 51 percent of families with children below the age of 5 in Rochester were living in poverty and that 73 percent of Monroe County residents living in poverty were living in the City. The pattern of poverty mirrors the crescent with all block groups in this area exhibiting a poverty rate of at least 33 percent. Parts of the Upper Falls neighborhood exhibit the worst poverty rate in the City at 68 percent, followed by Beechwood at 63 percent. Almost 60 percent of all families living in South Marketview Heights live below the poverty line. In the southeast, areas with high poverty rates include the South Wedge and Pearl-Meigs-Monroe, with over 40 percent of families living below the poverty line, and in portions of the Genesee-Jefferson, Plymouth Exchange and 19th Ward (near Thurston Road and Brooks Avenue) that have rates of over 30 percent. Low poverty rates of less than three percent are found in Cobbs Hill, East Avenue, Park Avenue, Charlotte, Browncroft and parts of the 19th Ward.
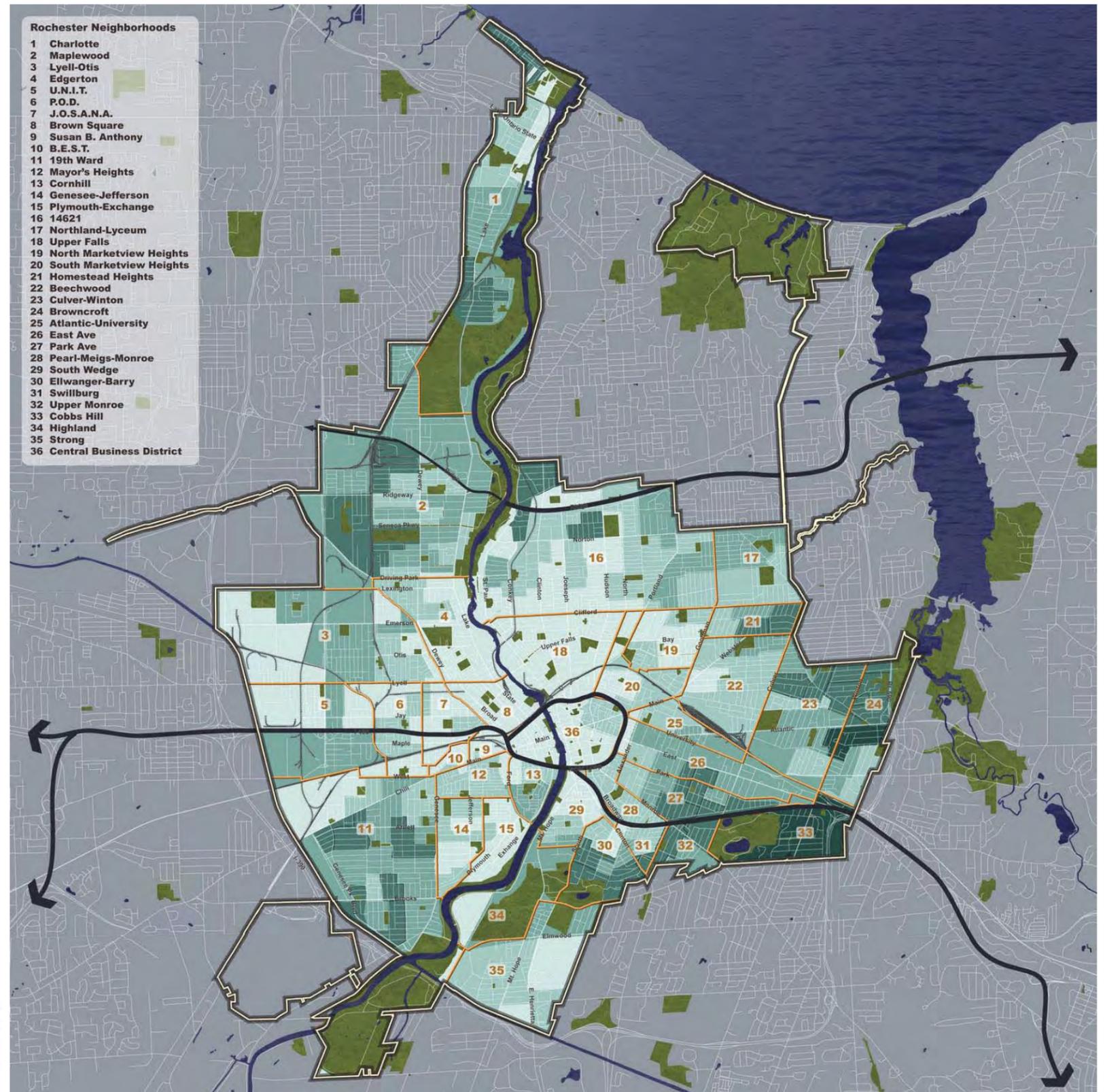
[17] McArdle, Nancy. "The Changing Face of Rochester: A Demographic, Housing, and Socio-Economic Portrait." December, 2003.

Rochester Neighborhoods

1. Charlotte
2. Maplewood
3. Lyell-Otis
4. Edgerton
5. U.N.I.T.
6. P.O.D.
7. J.O.S.A.N.A.
8. Brown Square
9. Susan B. Anthony
10. B.E.S.T.
11. 19th Ward
12. Mayor's Heights
13. Cornhill
14. Genesee-Jefferson
15. Plymouth-Exchange
16. 14621
17. Northland-Lyceum
18. Upper Falls
19. North Marketview Heights
20. South Marketview Heights
21. Homestead Heights
22. Beechwood
23. Culver-Winton
24. Browncroft
25. Atlantic-University
26. East Ave
27. Park Ave
28. Pearl-Meigs-Monroe
29. South Wedge
30. Ellwanger-Barry
31. Swillburg
32. Upper Monroe
33. Cobbs Hill
34. Highland
35. Strong
36. Central Business District

Legend:
- $0 - $20,000
- $20,001 - $30,000
- $30,001 - $40,000
- $40,001 - $60,000
- $60,001 +

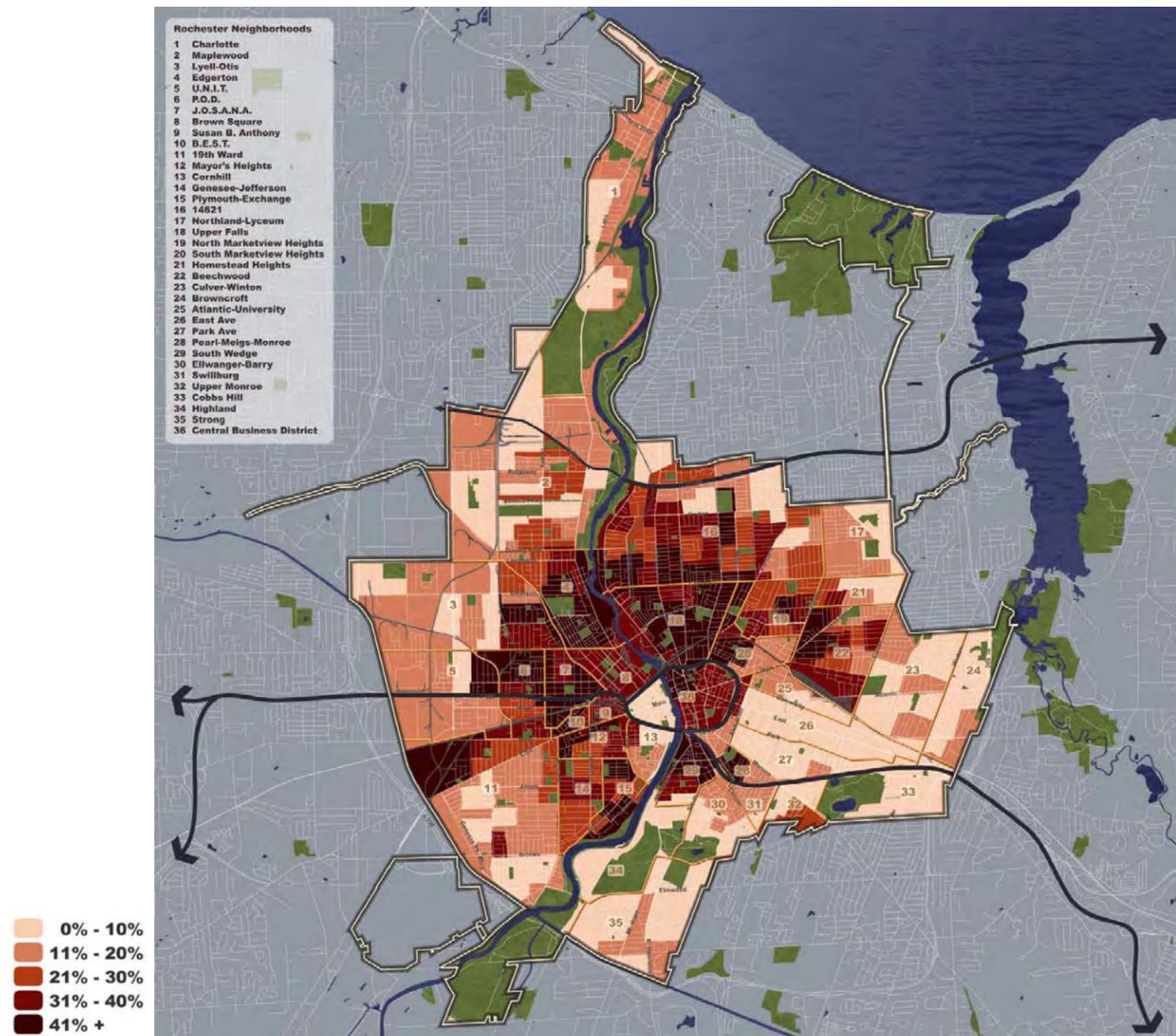*Figure 18. Median Household Income, 1999. Source: U.S. Census, 2000*

Figure 19. Percent of Families Living Below the Poverty Line, 1999. Source: U.S. Census, 2000
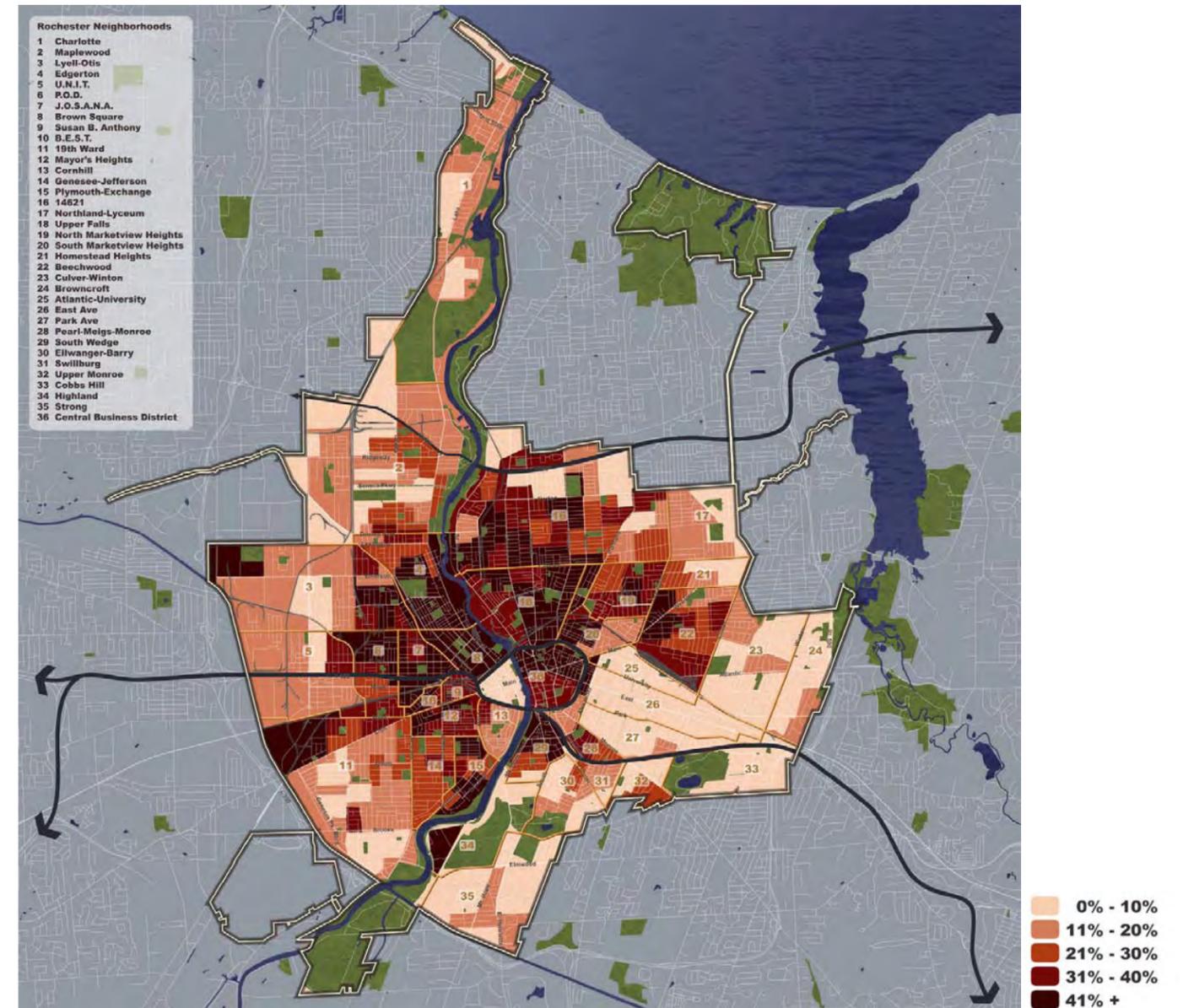

Figure 20. Estimated Percent of Families Living Below the Poverty Line, 2006. Source: Claritas

Between 2000 and 2006, estimates indicate that these poverty trends were reinforced across the City. The southeast neighborhoods remained strong, hovering around zero percent, while those with high poverty rates worsened. The 14621 neighborhood jumped to a poverty rate of 72 percent and Upper Falls to 68 percent. In addition, Brown Square and parts of Maplewood experienced noticeable increases in poverty rates. These areas also represent some amount of population loss. Given that the largest losses have traditionally been of households with incomes at least twice the poverty rate, the remaining families with low incomes comprise a larger percentage of the total population. It should be noted that the high poverty rates exhibited in downtown Rochester are the result of a low overall population combined with the presence of a large number of subsidized housing units.

The concerns over poverty and, more to the point, concentrated poverty, have been expressed by local stakeholders throughout this Study. Intertwined with a high unemployment rate of 6.4 percent in 2006 and the continuing job losses, issues of poverty directly impact housing and the quality of neighborhoods. Further, the low educational attainment continues the cycle. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of adults in 2000 did not have a high school diploma, and this figure remains the same in 2006.
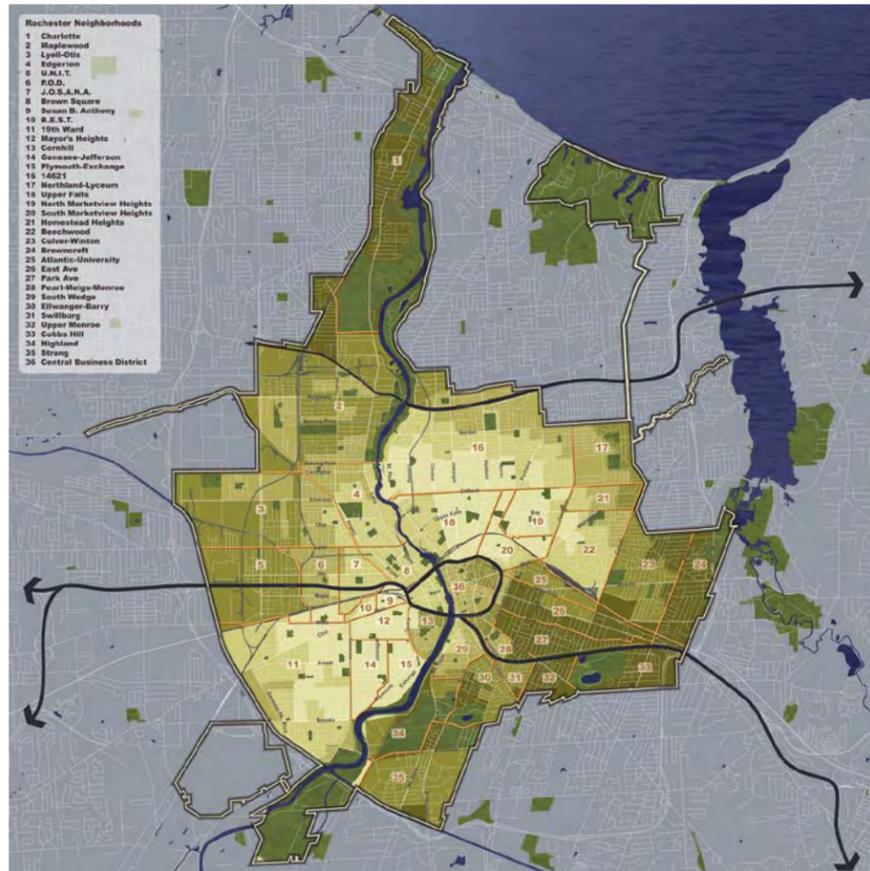
Figure 21. Percent of Population White, 2000. Source: U.S. Census, 2000
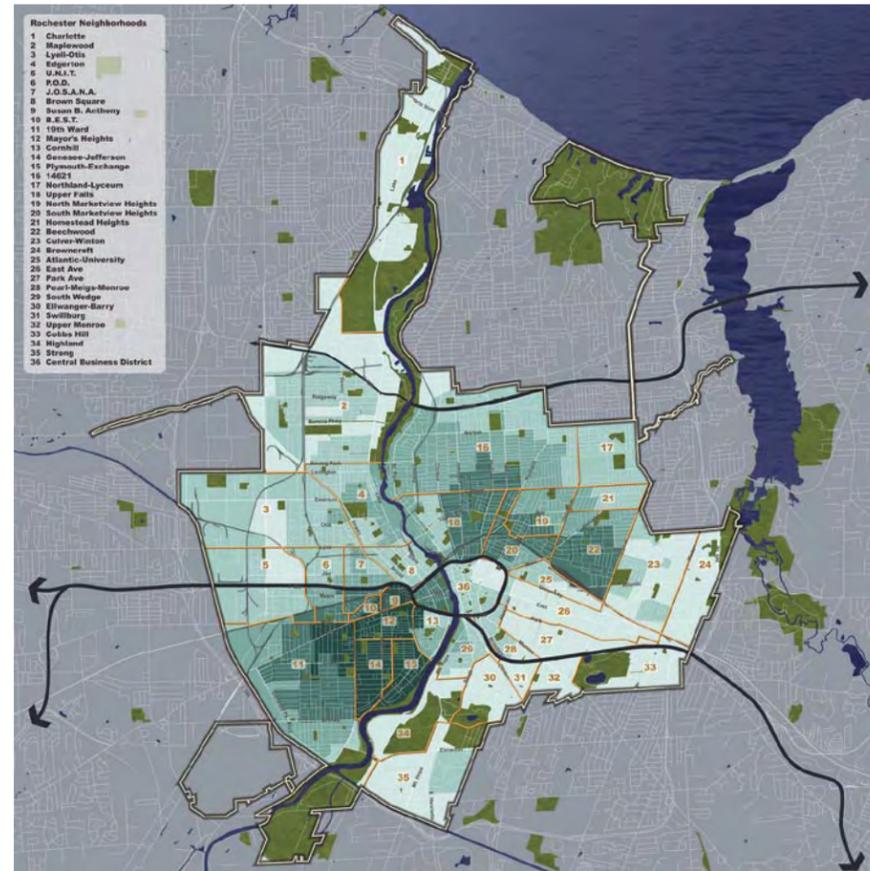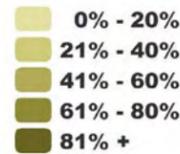

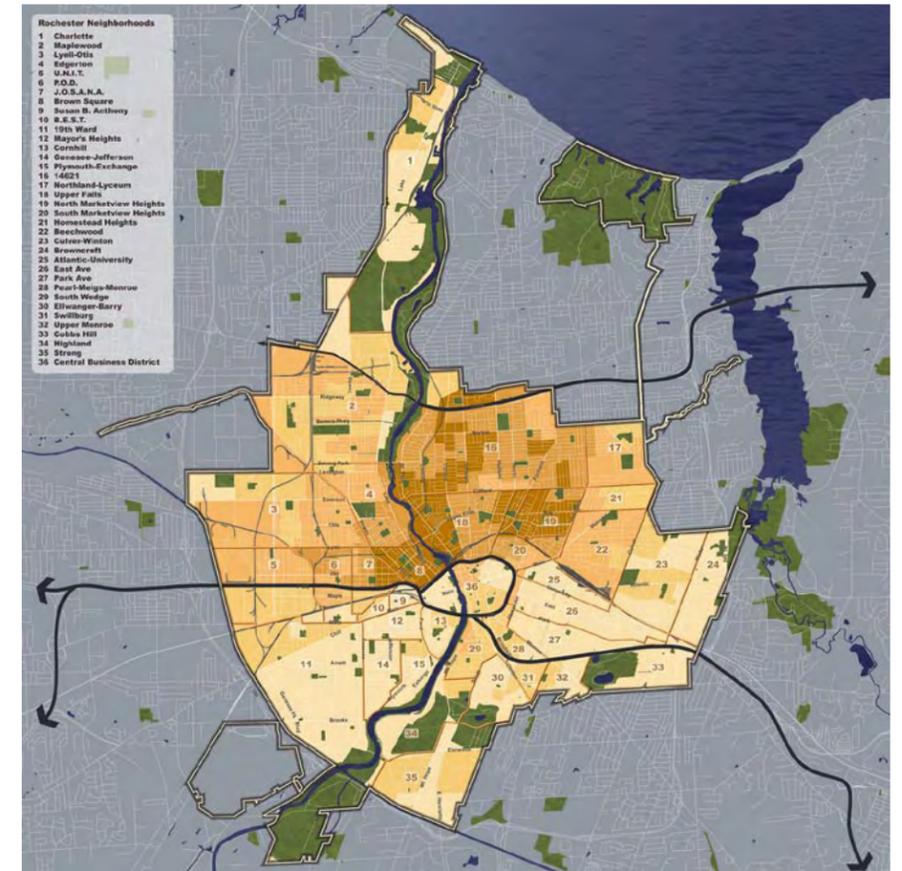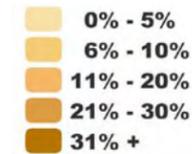Figure 22. Percent of Population Black, 2000. Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Figure 23. Percent of Population Latino, 2000. Source: U.S. Census, 2000

	0% - 20%
	21% - 40%
	41% - 60%
	61% - 80%
	81% +

	0% - 20%
	21% - 40%
	41% - 60%
	61% - 80%
	81% +

	0% - 5%
	6% - 10%
	11% - 20%
	21% - 30%
	31% +

Race

In 2000, Rochester was 44 percent white, 39 percent black, 13 percent Latino and three percent Asian. As early as the 1940s, it was a well documented phenomenon that Rochester was becoming less white and more diverse overall. This growing diversity was initially a slow process but has accelerated since 1980. In 1980, 71 percent of the City was white. Now a majority-minority city, there is an increasing number of Asian residents, particularly Vietnamese, Chinese and Laotian. Of Rochester's Latino population, 85 percent are Puerto Rican. In contrast, 92 percent of families outside Rochester were White.

While the growing numbers of Latinos, Asians and other foreign born residents have helped to off-set population losses, some have difficulty integrating into the fabric of the City or utilizing services that could help them to improve their lives. In 2000, 15,000 people reported that they spoke English "less than very well."[18] This "linguistic isolation" represents one in 10 households north of downtown Rochester along the River and one in five households in parts of Upper Falls, 14621 and North Marketview Heights. The "linguistic isolation" mirrors the concentrations of the City's Puerto Rican residents.

The issues of linguistic isolation and cultural differences are only compounded by an increasing physical isolation. In 2000, the average white resident lived in an area that was 62 percent white. While the segregation between white and black residents is typical of other cities, the segregation between white and Latino families is extreme. Rochester ranks 45th nationally in terms of white / Latino segregation. In reviewing the concentrations of ethnicities, there are only a few neighborhoods that are truly diverse, most notably Edgerton, Lyell-Otis and Beechwood.
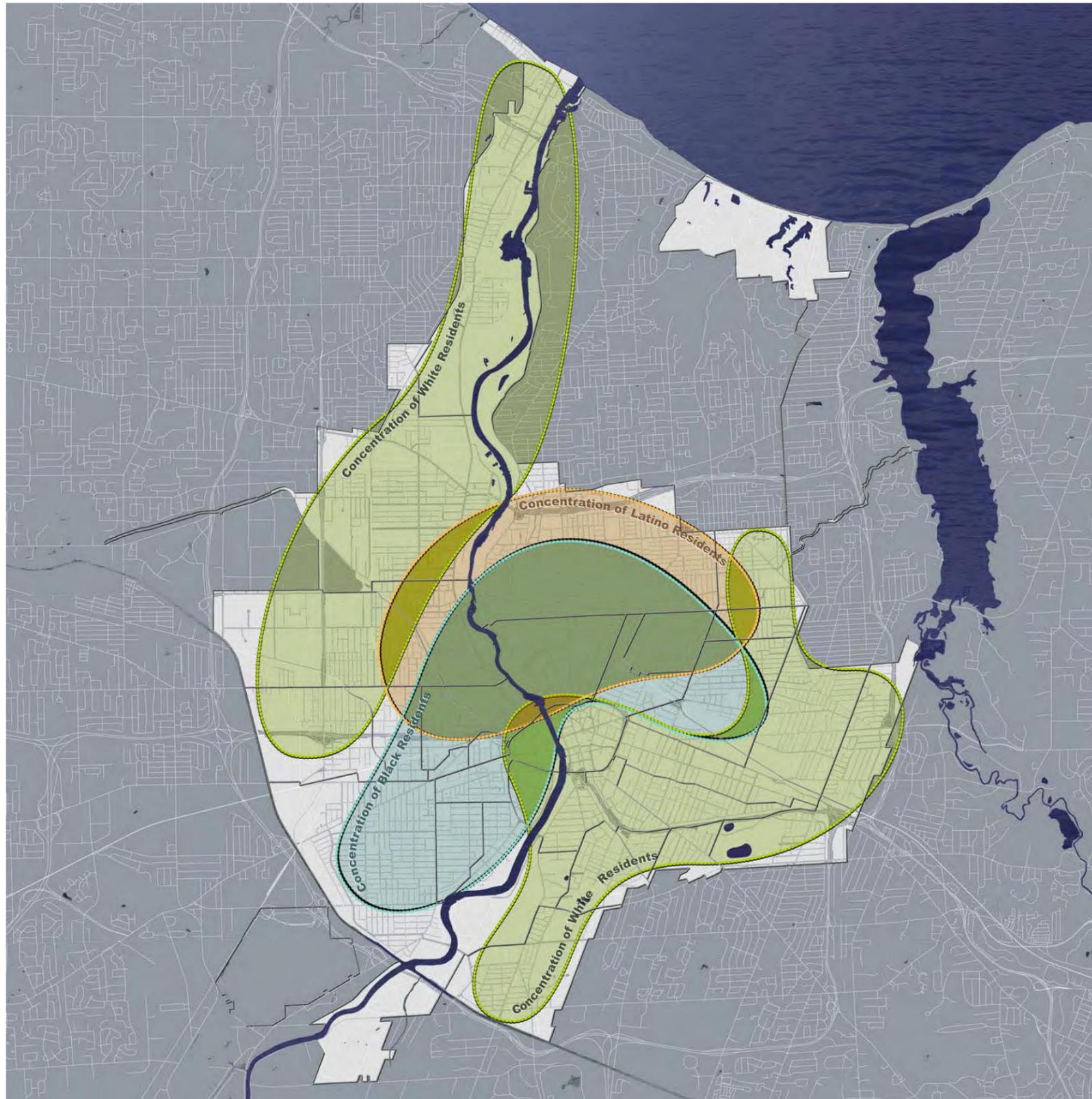
Figure 24. Race Overlay. Source: Interface Studio based on U.S. Census data, 2000.

Summary

All of these factors reveal many challenges. Despite the investment and commitment of the City, not-for-profit and private entities in bringing about change across all City neighborhoods, the trends indicate a widening gulf in social and economic characteristics, with many neighborhoods left further behind. Despite the low cost of housing, there is still a need for affordable homes in the City as much as there is a need to retain the middle-income families that have been leaving Rochester at an accelerated pace. One of the striking observations from reviewing the trends is that there are many locations in Rochester where a number of blocks stand in stark contrast, either good or bad, from the surrounding community. Neighborhoods such as the 19th Ward, Maplewood and North Marketview Heights exemplify this pattern. Blocks in good condition are adjacent to those in deteriorated condition. Low median incomes and high poverty rates abut comparatively high median incomes and low poverty rates. Population gains and losses are sometimes divided by one street. These are the "pressure points"[19] of the City that require further discussion and thinking. The next section looks at these and other factors that provide an on the ground perspective of the City.

[18] Mc Ardle, Nancy. "The Changing Face of Rochester: A Demographic, Housing, and Socio-Economic Portrait." December, 2003.

[19] Jamie Lerner, former Mayor of Curitiba, uses urban acupuncture as an analogy for strategic investments.