



# Rochester

## DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

### Local Planning Committee Meeting #2

March 16, 2022



# Meeting Agenda

- Welcome
- Code of Conduct / Conflict of Interest
- Planning Updates
  - Public meeting #1
  - Stakeholder interviews
  - Downtown profile
- **LPC Discussion**
  - Confirmation of vision and goals
  - Review of strategies
  - Preliminary review of emerging projects
  - Next steps and meetings
- **Public Comment**



# LPC Members

Name	Affiliation
<b>Malik Evans – Co-Chair</b> <i>Tamara Mayberry</i>	<b>Mayor, City of Rochester</b> <i>Chief of Staff, City of Rochester</i>
<b>Robert Duffy – Co-Chair</b>	<b>Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce</b>
Stephanie Rankin	RG&E
Shawn Dunwoody	Dunwoode Visual Consulting
Eugenio Marlin	Ibero-American Development Corporation
Heidi Zimmer-Meyer	Rochester Downtown Development Corporation
Clayton Jones	University of Rochester, Local Government and Community
Jeff McCann	Monroe County Planning and Development
Lauren Gallina Payne	Gallina Development
Rachel Laber Pulvino	Visit Rochester
Ebony Miller-Wesley	RIT-Center for Urban Entrepreneurship
Lisa Baron	Greentopia
Joseph Stefko	ROC 2025
Ken Glazer	Buckingham Properties
Jim Brown	Rochester Riverside Convention Center
Nichole Malec	Rochester Regional Health

# Planning Updates

## Public meeting #1 (March 2)

- Introduction to DRI program
- Individual and group exercises related to the vision statement, goals, project idea priorities for the DRI area
- 50+ participated (in person and on Zoom)



# Public meeting #1

**ROCHESTER, NY DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE VISIONING SESSION MARCH 2022**

**PROJECT IDEA MAP**

**What do you love about this area?**

- synergy between Rochester + East End
- Transit friendly area
- ROC Holiday Village (ack. Fall)
- Jazz Festival neighborhood experience
- Public availability

**What are the area's challenges?**

- dead zone (E. Main St.)
- "I don't know if I like anything about downtown"
- Renovation of buildings need to be thoughtful
- parking available but use case
- Multiple businesses in one space
- Make's environment better? What's the plan? (acknowledgment)
- Handwritten notes: "I don't know if I like anything about downtown", "Renovation of buildings need to be thoughtful", "parking available but use case", "Multiple businesses in one space", "Make's environment better? What's the plan? (acknowledgment)".

**What opportunities do you see for the area?**

- Multiple businesses to retail?
- Restoration of buildings
- Access to the river
- Renovation of buildings and landscaping (build up with retail)
- Evening use to attract give area a different feel
- Handwritten notes: "Multiple businesses to retail?", "Restoration of buildings", "Access to the river", "Renovation of buildings and landscaping (build up with retail)", "Evening use to attract give area a different feel".

**TOP FIVE PRIORITIES**

1. Restoration E. Main/West of Main
2. Retail/Amenities
3. Pedestrian friendly development
4. Retail near transit center
5. Recreation/Entertainment - Pop up along riverway

**DRI AREA CONTEXT**



## **Draft vision as presented at public meeting**

Downtown is the vibrant heart of our region; a place that will continue to attract a diverse population of new residents and where investments will boom. Fast-growing, it will attract even more innovation, arts, culture, and entertainment so as to boost yearly visitors and overall economic development. The infusion of additional investments triggered by a DRI grant will put the finishing touches on our Downtown revitalization and cement it as the centerpiece of the Finger Lakes region.

## Common themes in response to vision statement

### Vibrancy

*“Must have vibrant retail if folks will be incentivized to walk from booming East End to the Riverway”*

### Role of residents

*“Rochestarians have an opportunity to be invested in revitalization”*

### Unique identity

*“Rochester has good bones”*

### Safety and security

*“Need a greater sense of public safety in and near new developments”*

### High-quality public realm

*“[Need] investment in high-quality public realm and public spaces that attract people to spend time downtown”*



## Updated vision (changes highlighted)

Our downtown is the vibrant, connected heart of our region, a place where a diverse population of new and long-time residents live, work, and spend time. Walkable, safe, and uniquely Rochester, Downtown is a place where economic, cultural, and social investments will grow and thrive. Continuing to attract innovation, arts, culture, and entertainment, it will boost yearly visitors and overall economic development. The infusion of additional investments triggered by a DRI grant will help put the finishing touches on our Downtown revitalization and cement it as the centerpiece of the Finger Lakes region.

## Draft goals as presented at public meeting

- Reimagine and revitalize East Main Street
- Create a vibrant urban center and attractive public realm that welcomes everyone
- Increase the amount of mixed-use, mixed-income housing in Downtown
- Increase our emerging technology and creative class businesses; support our existing businesses; and grow Downtown's retail sector
- Further strengthen Rochester's reputation as the cultural center of the Finger Lakes region

## Common themes in response to draft goals

### Not just Main St.

*“Highlight some of the other major corridors: St. Paul, Clinton, Andrews”*

### Green

*“I hope revitalization doesn’t mean more concrete”*

### Connections

*Reimagine and revitalize East Main Street “...including its connections to the Genesee Riverway Trail and other ROC the Riverway projects”*

### Tech service and access

*“Bring in new technologies that people didn’t know they wanted or needed.”*

## Updated goals (changes highlighted)

- Reimagine and revitalize East Main Street and Downtown's connective corridors
- Create a vibrant urban center and attractive, green public realm that welcomes everyone
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# Table map exercise results

## Assets

- Cultural and recreational amenities (Eastman, Grove Place, garden at St Andrews, St. Joseph's)
- River, Sister Cities Bridge
- Revitalization of nearby buildings like Sibley
- Easy transportation
- Rich cultural experience (Jazz Fest, Holiday Village)
- Variety and scale of architecture, intact historic buildings

## Challenges

- Corner of South Clinton and Main Street
- "I don't know if I like anything about downtown"
- Entertainment/recreation opportunities lacking
- Vacant and underutilized buildings and first floor retail - business recruitment is difficult
- Access issues between river and retail
- Not a pleasant pedestrian experience
- Cost to renovate

## Opportunities

- Division St – backs of buildings could be pedestrian destination
- Build on existing good preservation work
- Amenities for people waiting between bus transfers
- Support entrepreneurs to bring small retail downtown
- Pop-ups along the river
- More events like the Holiday Village

## Table map exercise results

### Top priorities

- Local shopping opportunities
- Increase ground floor retail
- Walkability
- Multi-modal transportation options
- Public safety
- Housing for everyone
- Green space
- Improved access to the river and ROC the Riverway



## Stakeholder interviews

- Team has conducted 10+ interviews with developers, property owners, parties with project ideas
- Key goal is to further develop market understanding
- Stakeholder interviews are also unlocking potential project opportunities

## Themes so far

- Office/retail still hard, but some enduring interest nonetheless (planning for rents \$18-20/sf in prime locations), but buildout requirements increasingly expensive.
  - Some draw from the suburbs/elsewhere (Constellation, Butler/Till) but still not much
- Residential conversions still very appealing – no signs of market-rate development slowing down. Leases are going early and easily, especially for smaller units.
  - Market-rate rents anywhere from sub-\$1/sf (for older buildings) to \$2.25-2.50 for highest end
- Clean up Clinton/Main = unlock further development, pride, vibrancy


# Downtown Profile





# DOWNTOWN PROFILE

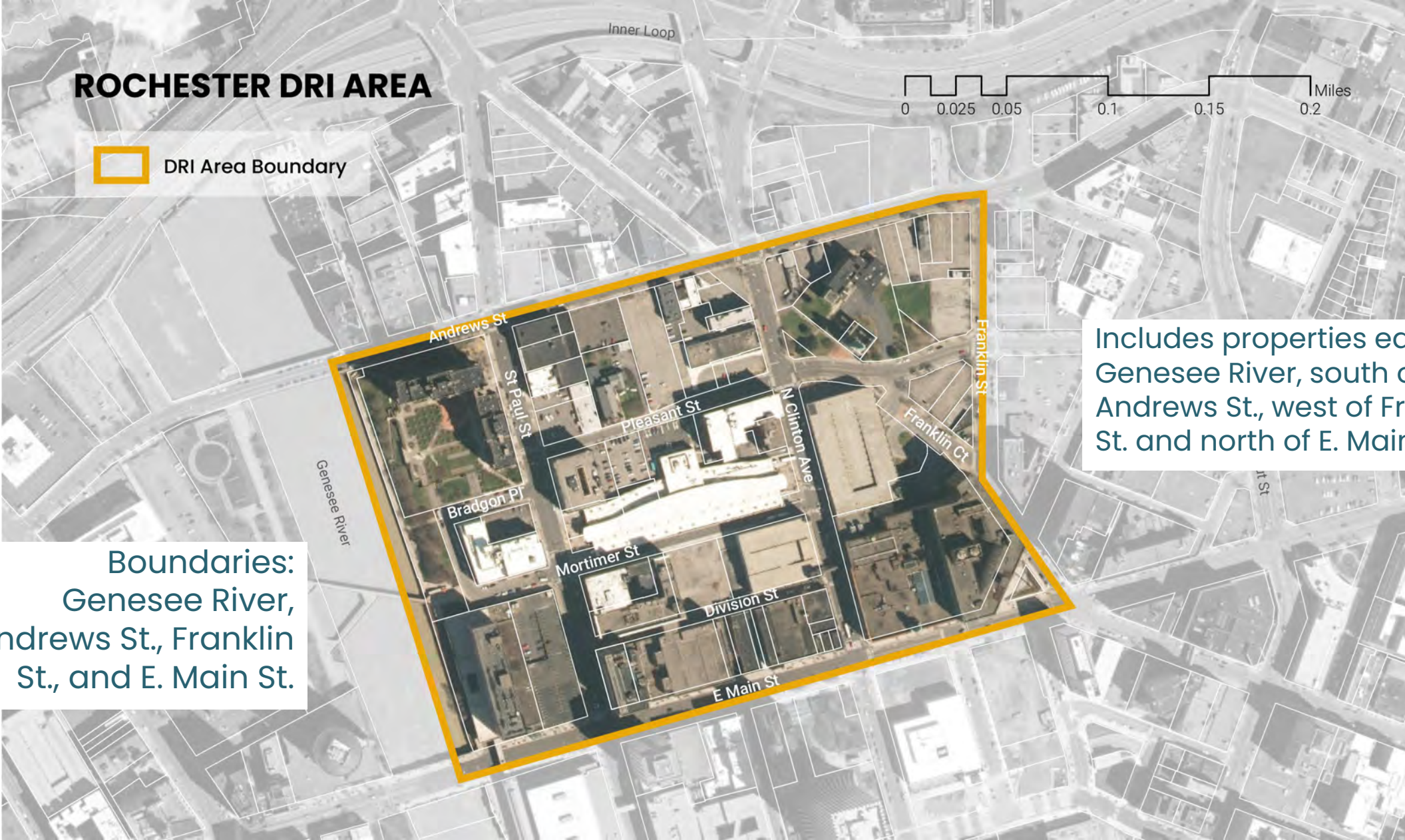
## ROCHESTER DRI AREA

 DRI Area Boundary



Includes properties east of Genesee River, south of Andrews St., west of Franklin St. and north of E. Main St.

Boundaries:  
Genesee River,  
Andrews St., Franklin  
St., and E. Main St.



## Downtown profile: Demographics

- The DRI area is dense, even as compared to other parts of Downtown– It accounts for 10% of the Inner Loop’s land area and 15% of its residents.
- Residents of the DRI area are more likely to walk to work, and less likely to own or lease a car

**% Resident Workers Walking to Work**

DRI Boundary



Inner Loop



Rochester



**Household Vehicle Own/Lease Rate**

DRI Boundary



Inner Loop



Rochester



**% Population Over 65**

DRI Boundary



Inner Loop



Rochester



## Downtown profile: Demographics

- Downtown Rochester remains an employment hub, with an estimated 5x as many people there during a given weekday than there are residents at night
- The DRI area has less of a daytime population boom than the rest of Downtown

**Daytime  
Population vs.  
Nighttime  
Population  
Multiplier**

DRI Boundary

**1.5x**

Inner Loop

**3.2x**

Downtown<sup>\*</sup>

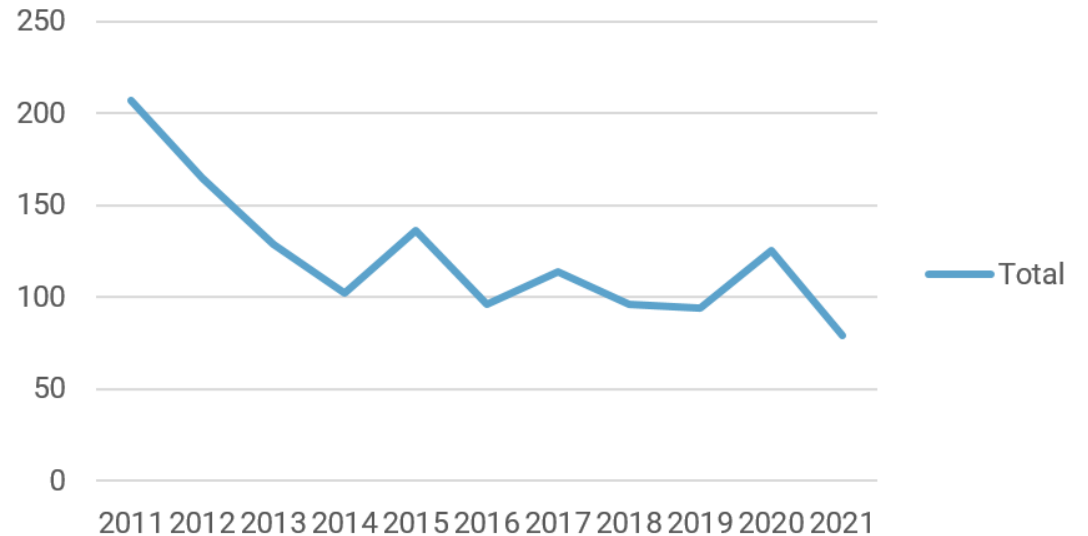
**5x**

\*as defined by RDDC – includes  
Monroe/Alexander and High Falls

## Downtown profile: Safety

- While some types of crimes have seen upticks in the past decade, recorded crime instances have trended downward overall in the past decade.

# Reported Crimes in the DRI Area by Year, 2011-2021 (Source: RPD)



# Downtown profile: Retail environment



<b>Restaurant/ Eating Place Leakage/ Surplus</b>	DRI Boundary	Rochester
	<b>-67</b>	<b>-11.3</b>
<b>Retail Leakage/ Surplus</b>	DRI Boundary	Rochester
	<b>13.6</b>	<b>6.3</b>

- Restaurants and eating places in the DRI area serve a much bigger consumer population than its residents alone.
- Meanwhile, the DRI area's retail leakage/surplus value indicates that in order to meet retail needs, residents of this area go to other parts of the city and region.



Neighborhood goods and services have been identified as a potential growth opportunity

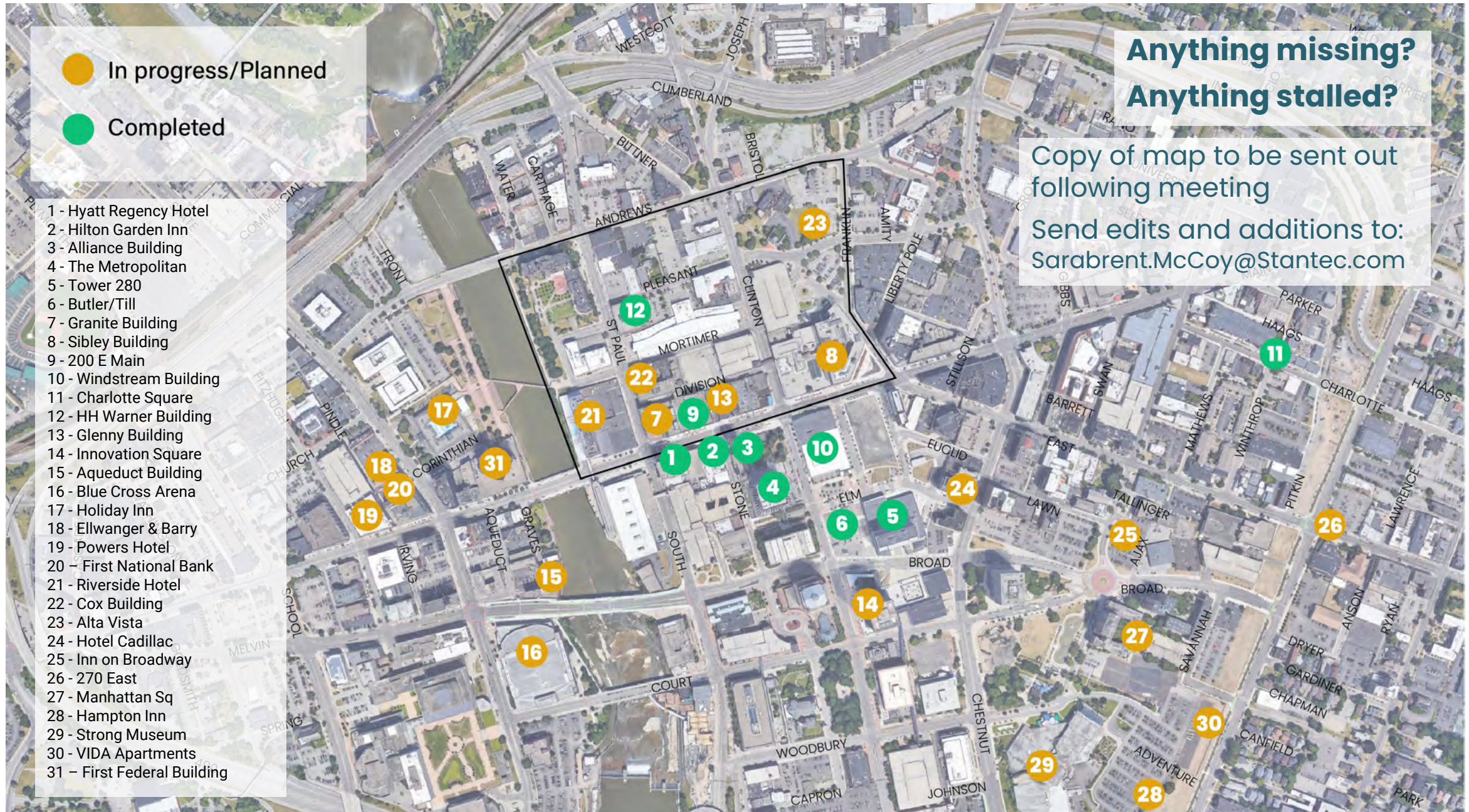
# Draft map of in progress or planned projects

-  In progress/Planned
-  Completed

- 1 - Hyatt Regency Hotel
- 2 - Hilton Garden Inn
- 3 - Alliance Building
- 4 - The Metropolitan
- 5 - Tower 280
- 6 - Butler/Till
- 7 - Granite Building
- 8 - Sibley Building
- 9 - 200 E Main
- 10 - Windstream Building
- 11 - Charlotte Square
- 12 - HH Warner Building
- 13 - Glenn Building
- 14 - Innovation Square
- 15 - Aqueduct Building
- 16 - Blue Cross Arena
- 17 - Holiday Inn
- 18 - Ellwanger & Barry
- 19 - Powers Hotel
- 20 - First National Bank
- 21 - Riverside Hotel
- 22 - Cox Building
- 23 - Alta Vista
- 24 - Hotel Cadillac
- 25 - Inn on Broadway
- 26 - 270 East
- 27 - Manhattan Sq
- 28 - Hampton Inn
- 29 - Strong Museum
- 30 - VIDA Apartments
- 31 - First Federal Building

Anything missing?  
Anything stalled?

Copy of map to be sent out following meeting  
Send edits and additions to:  
[Sarahbrent.McCoy@Stantec.com](mailto:Sarahbrent.McCoy@Stantec.com)



# LPC Discussion

## For LPC discussion

- Confirm vision statement
- Discuss draft goals and potential strategies
- Public meeting #2 + publicity
- Next steps





## Updated vision

Our downtown is the vibrant, connected heart of our region, a place where a diverse population of new and long-time residents live, work, and spend time. Walkable, safe, and uniquely Rochester, Downtown is a place where economic, cultural, and social investments will grow and thrive. Continuing to attract innovation, arts, culture, and entertainment, it will boost yearly visitors and overall economic development. The infusion of additional investments triggered by a DRI grant will help put the finishing touches on our downtown revitalization and cement it as the centerpiece of the Finger Lakes region.

### LPC discussion:

- **What do we mean by “safe”? What does that entail? “Welcoming”?**
- **How/If people are working downtown is changing so much – How to account for those changes?**
- **“Accessibility”/“Accessible” is missing!**

# What word or words are most important to you in the vision statement?



## Updated goals

- Reimagine and revitalize East Main Street and Downtown's connective corridors
- Create a vibrant urban center and attractive, green public realm that welcomes everyone
- Increase the amount of mixed-use, mixed-income housing in Downtown
- Increase our emerging technology and creative class businesses; support our existing businesses; and grow Downtown's retail sector
- Further strengthen Rochester's reputation as the cultural center of the Finger Lakes region

# Goal: Reimagine and revitalize East Main Street and Downtown's connective corridors

## Potential Strategies

- Address vacancy and blight along East Main Street
- Support pedestrian connections to and from East Main Street
- Promote St. Paul, Andrews, and Clinton as pedestrian-friendly corridors
- Attract ground floor commercial to make the pedestrian experience more interactive
- And...?

## LPC discussion:

- What would be really catalytic?
- "Pedestrian connections" could promote catalytic activity; breaks up large blocks that pedestrians have to experience
- Welcoming! Need to be specific, intentional about who this place is welcoming to – including people on the street and investors (What gets investors excited about this place?)
- No mention of safety (St Paul, Andrews, Clinton) – for pedestrians, in particular
- Improving lighting is low-hanging fruit.
- RG&E program for investments in lighting improvements
- How to leverage other funding sources beyond the \$10M? This is an opportunity to leverage.
- Clarify "Support" and "Promote" and "Attract" – wanting retail and having the economics work out are two different things. "Improving", but will clarify
- Ground floor active uses (retail/health and fitness/food biz/pop-up uses), not just "commercial" – How to encourage creativity in storefront, façade, programming – all of it

# Goal: Create a vibrant urban center and attractive, green public realm that welcomes everyone

## Potential Strategies

- Facilitate connections to green spaces, including the River and ROC the Riverway projects
- Support existing businesses and increase new retail in strategic locations
- Support retail options that contribute to street life
- Design public spaces where everyone feels safe and welcome
- Attract amenities around the bus terminal
- Increase tourist and regional visits
- And...?

## LPC discussion:

- **Combine 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>**
- **Design public spaces + the first two = more comfortable connections between Liberty Pole and the River. That connection should be interesting and feel good.**
- **Strategic and thoughtful about public spaces – you need to make sure it's a welcoming connection, for everyone. Pocket park for the sake of pocket park (without programming or reason) will not do what it intends.**
- **\$10M not for programming. But permanent arts/culture fixtures are eligible.**

## Goal: Increase the amount of mixed-use, mixed-income housing in Downtown Rochester

### Potential Strategies

- Build on existing momentum to build more housing for the market's current primary demographics (students, young professionals), but also other groups, such as downsizing suburbanites
- Continue to provide affordable housing options downtown
- Contribute to the overall diversity of housing options in Rochester, both adaptive reuse and new construction, smaller and larger units
- And...?

### LPC discussion:

- **Housing for artists – not a focus yet, but increasing interest. Ground floor studio.**
- **Clarify that seniors are part of the broad audience we want to build housing for**

# Goal: Increase our emerging technology and creative class businesses; support our existing businesses; and grow Downtown's retail sector

## Potential Strategies

- Connect local workforce to new employers
- Support entrepreneurial/incubator opportunities that target the local workforce
- Build on current local growth sectors (creative, technology)
- Attract neighborhood commercial amenities that residents need
- And...?

## LPC discussion:

- **"Innovation" belongs somewhere between 2 and 3. Literal and spirit of innovation – capture somewhere.**
- **What's in scope of DRI? Creating environment vs. efforts that many others are already working on. Focus on space, experience on street feels like DRI focus. X2 ... Many of these strategies have funding elsewhere. Rephrase/scratch 1 and 2.**
- **Maybe not a goal, but maybe we instead take into account projects that support businesses that want to do something specific downtown but can't.**

## Goal: Further strengthen Rochester's reputation as the cultural center of the Finger Lakes region

### Potential Strategies

- Build on events like Jazz Fest and the Holiday Village to increase programming Downtown
- Support initiatives that preserve and enhance what makes Rochester unique
- Support existing institutions
- Promote and program a local and diverse array of creative initiatives
- Celebrate Rochester's history in the DRI area
- And...?

### LPC discussion:

- **An opportunity to promote/highlight downtown activity beyond Jazz Fest, etc. (especially with COVID situation changing)**
- **How much of this is in scope of DRI? What's already well-funded?**
- **How will these projects support a uniquely downtown culture?**
- **Tech – kiosks, digital interface, to help new walkers and visitors understand what's available and exciting about downtown**
- **How to use this opportunity to create a new cultural attraction?**

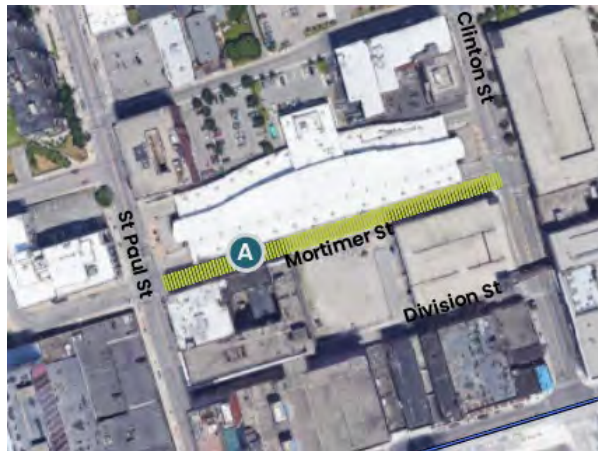


# Initial public realm projects



- A** **Mortimer St Improvements:** *Improve public realm and bus and multi-modal access.*
- B** **Division St Improvements:** *Transform pedestrian and public realm to support adjacent new residential and commercial uses.*
- C** **NW Corner Main and Clinton:** *Pursue public realm improvements and enhancement, such as multimodal transportation opportunities and electric vehicle charging stations.*
- D** **Main Street Commons:** *Create new public plaza and pedestrian connection between East Main Street and Division Street to support proposed retail/ restaurant spaces and enhance multi-modal circulation in the district.*

Public realm  
project ideas:  
**Mortimer St.**  
**streetscape**  
**improvements**



Despite investments in lighting, Mortimer St. remains uninviting to pedestrians

Public realm  
project ideas:  
**Division St.**  
**streetscape**  
**improvements**



Limited lighting

Few pedestrian amenities

Public realm  
project ideas:  
**NW Corner Main**  
**and Clinton**  
**public realm**  
**improvements**



Multi-modal connections



EV charging



Lighting for cars,  
not pedestrians

Limited pedestrian  
amenities

Public realm  
project ideas:  
**Main St.**  
**Commons**



Entrance from E Main St



Source:  
Fortified

## Next steps

- Confirm future LPC meetings. Invitations already sent.
- Confirm whether future meetings will continue to be fully virtual (via Zoom) or hybrid (with an in-person option)
- Support with review of draft downtown profile
- Review of emerging project profiles
- Public meeting #2

MEETING	DATE
#1	2/16
#2	3/16
#3	4/13
#4	5/18
#5	6/15
#6	6/29
#7*	7/13

\*Additional meetings if needed

## Public engagement strategy

- 3 public meetings
  - March 2: Development of vision and priorities
  - April 27: Review of project ideas
  - TBD: Presentation of recommended DRI strategy
- 6+ LPC meetings, with public comment
- Project website – document library, comment submission
- Spread word via existing City channels, LPC networks, social media, community organizations...

**Continue inviting your networks to meetings!**

Community organizations, cultural organizations, academic institutions, tenants, business owners...

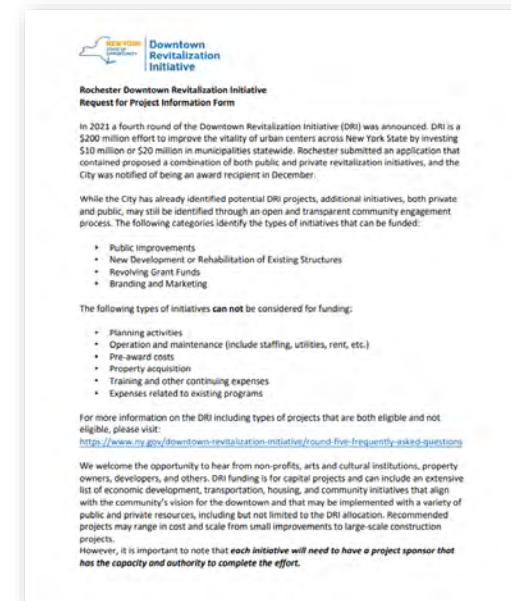
# Open call for projects

- Applications due **April 1**
- Requires detailed information about project sponsor, confirmed funding, plans, etc.
- DRI focused on implementable projects, **not just ideas**
- Consultant team available to discuss ideas:  
Philip.Schaeffing@Stantec.com

**SPREAD THE WORD!**

Access the project proposal form on the Rochester DRI webpage:

[www.cityofrochester.gov/DRI/](http://www.cityofrochester.gov/DRI/)





## Public meeting #2

- Tentative date – April 27<sup>th</sup>
- Presentation
  - Review of downtown profile
  - Overview of market analysis
  - Review of identified projects
- Open House
  - Opportunity for community to weigh in on potential DRI projects and interact with LPC members and project team

**Invite your networks to attend!**



# Public Comment

*Help us with your ideas to  
continue the momentum  
downtown!*

[www.cityofrochester.gov/DRI/](http://www.cityofrochester.gov/DRI/)

