

Comprehensive Plan
for the
EMMA & BEECHWOOD
Neighborhoods

Rochester, New York

Neighborhood Plan
January 2020

INTERFACE STUDIO LLC



Acknowledgements

This ***Comprehensive Plan for the EMMA and Beechwood Neighborhoods*** was made possible by:

- The interest and involvement of hundreds of **neighborhood residents** who dedicated their time, talents, and ideas to help shape the plan
- The community organizing efforts of seven **Resident Ambassadors** hired to build awareness of and participation in the planning process among people who live in EMMA and Beechwood:

Rhonda Clark	Andrea McLean	Damiano Smith	Tammy Westbrook
Aisha Da Costa	Rosetta McLean	Theresa Thomas	

- The ongoing collaboration between a broad group of community stakeholders, **neighborhood organizations**, and their networks of community champions and volunteers, key among them:

Connected Communities
EMMA Neighborhood and Business Association
Beechwood Neighborhood Coalition

- Support from the **City of Rochester**, which recognizes this plan as an opportunity to model the relationship between a new neighborhood plan and *Rochester 2034*, the City's Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in November 2019
- A collection of **previous plans and studies** focused on EMMA and Beechwood that provide critical background information and a foundation for this work, including:

Path Forward Plan with East High School, 2017
Asset-Based Assessment of Health and Wellness, 2018
Housing Development Market Study, 2018
as well as the *Citywide Housing Market Study*, 2018

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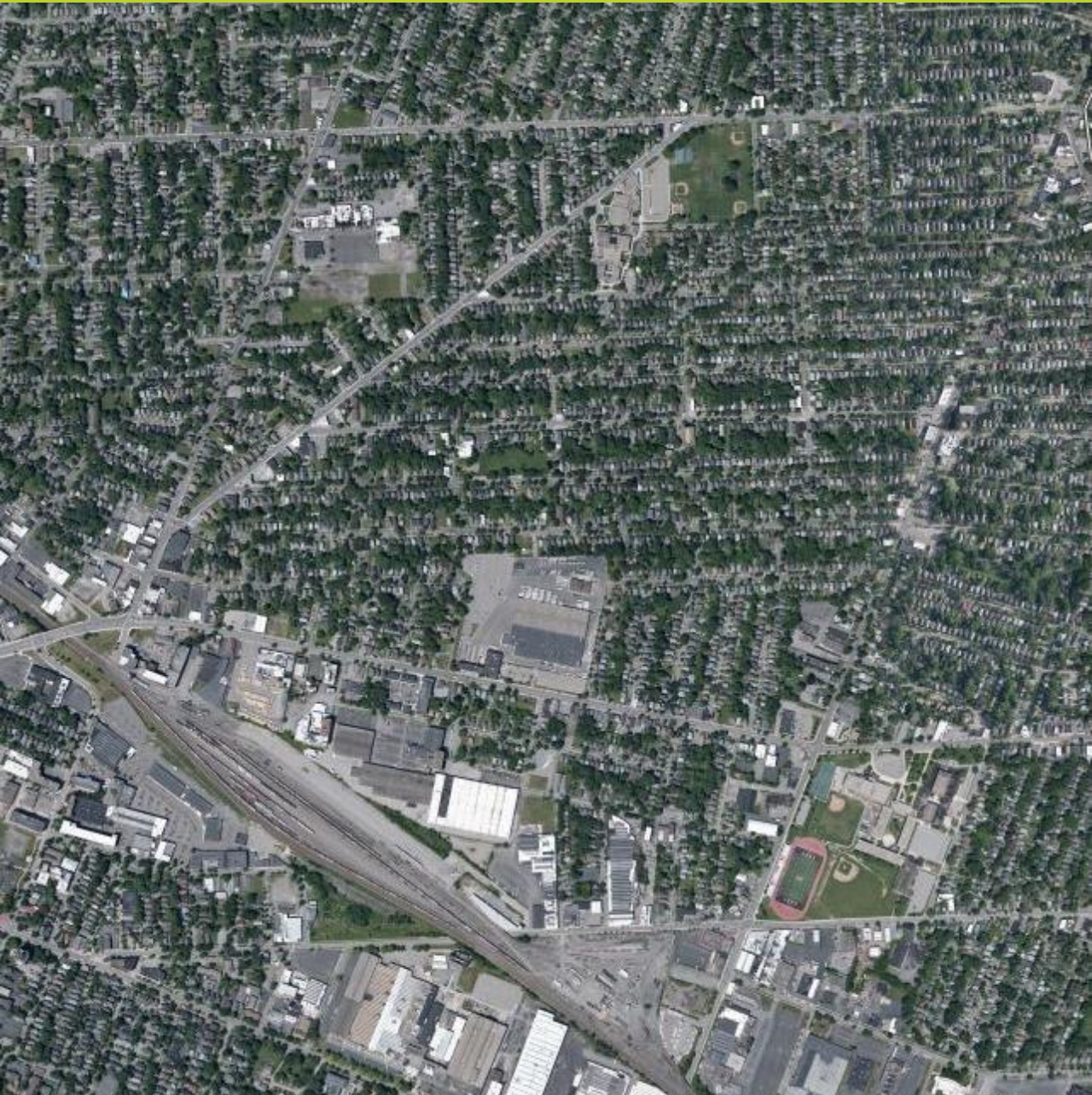
CGR

Housing Development Market Study

Community Development Advisors LLC
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Introduction

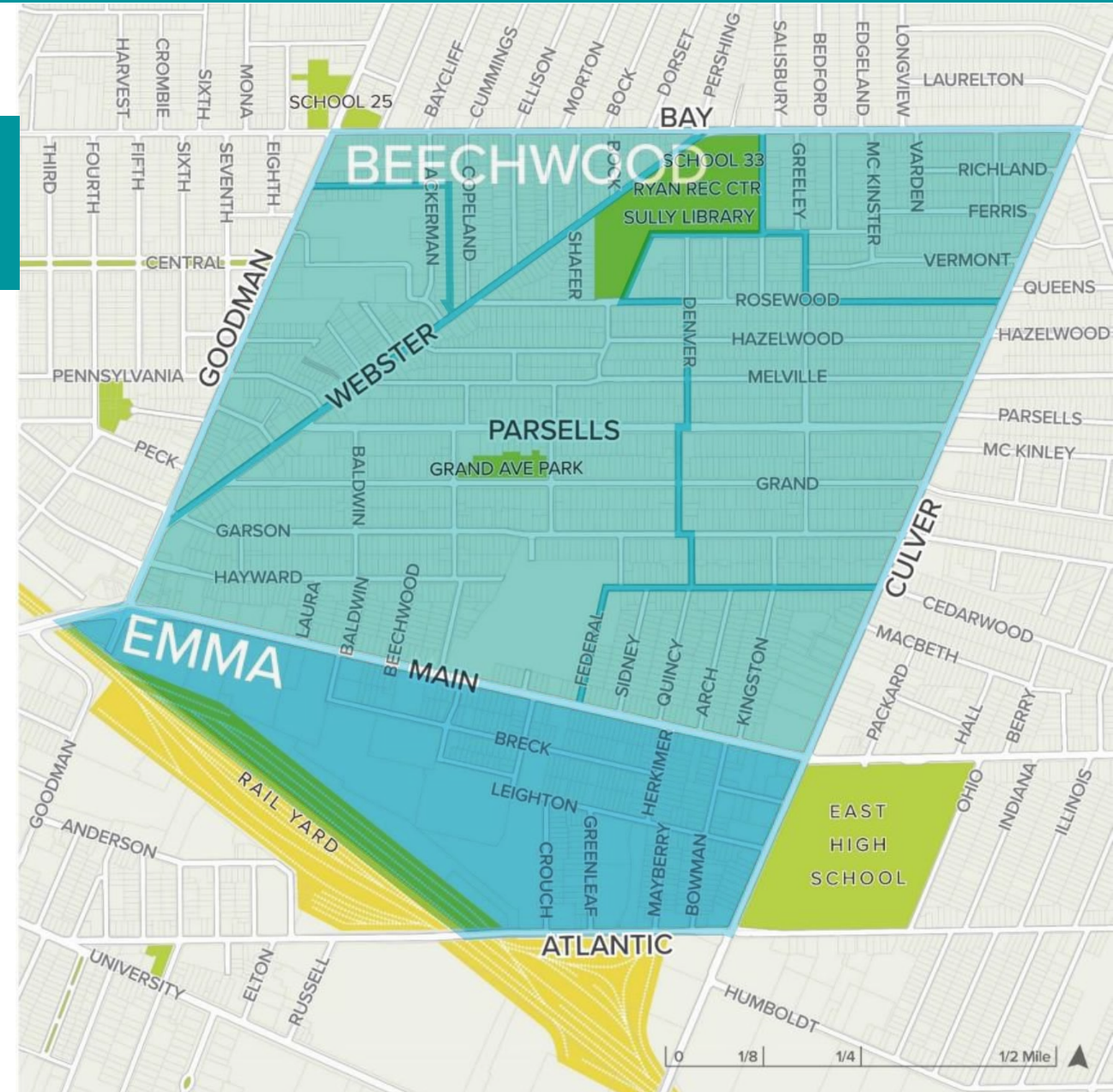
EMMA and Beechwood are located in the northeast quadrant of Rochester, New York.

Bisected by East Main Street, these two connected communities are bound by the CSX rail line and Atlantic Avenue to the south, Culver Road to the east, Bay Street to the north, and North Goodman Street to the east.

Together, EMMA and Beechwood comprise 0.85 square miles, home to over 8,600 residents and 2,900 households.



Connected Communities has hired seven Resident Ambassadors to organize residents in EMMA plus six sub-neighborhoods in Beechwood, drawn in this map.



Introduction

Who lives in EMMA and Beechwood?

EMMA, an acronym for local streets (East Main, Mustard, and Atlantic), is located south of East Main Street. EMMA is roughly 20% of the total project area and home to approximately 10% of residents within the project area.

The EMMA Neighborhood and Business Association is the primary community partner representing people who live and worship in the EMMA neighborhood.

Beechwood, to the north of East Main Street, is, by comparison, a larger neighborhood, accounting for 80% of the project area and home to 90% of residents who call this area home.

The Beechwood Neighborhood Coalition has identified six smaller pockets, or sub-sections of the neighborhood illustrated on the prior page, each with a slightly different urban fabric and/or personality.

EMMA and Beechwood, Connected Communities

While EMMA is home to a higher concentration of elders 65 and over and Beechwood has a much higher proportion of youth under the age of 18, the populations in the two neighborhoods have much in common. 76% of residents are people of color. 42% of all residents and 57% of neighborhood children live in poverty. Both neighborhoods have a concentration of vacant property and an aging housing stock, reflective of decades of disinvestment and a legacy of structural racism.

	BEECHWOOD	EMMA	ROCHESTER
Total Population	7,821	788	210,291
% Black	52%	63%	41%
% White	30%	17%	46%
% Hispanic/Latino	20%	16%	18%
Youth <small>Under 18</small>	36%	25%	24%
Seniors <small>65 and over</small>	5%	10%	10%
Median Annual Household Income	\$28,842	\$22,206	\$31,684
% Households in Poverty	34%	48%	30%
Housing-Cost Burdened <small>Households that pay more than 30% of their income towards housing costs</small>	59%	50%	47%

Source: American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2016, by Block Group

The mission of Connected Communities is to break the cycle of poverty and revitalize the EMMA and Beechwood neighborhoods.



Introduction

Why EMMA and Beechwood Need a Plan

EMMA and Beechwood are pilot neighborhoods for the **Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI)** – a community-informed, cross-sector coalition working to connect anti-poverty efforts, government initiatives, and educational strategies to reduce poverty in Rochester and Monroe County.

The purpose of this planning process is to develop a *community-driven, equitable, and holistic neighborhood plan for the future of EMMA and Beechwood.* Through consistent community engagement, the plan centers the vision and voices of local residents to guide necessary change and investment while preserving community assets and protecting against the displacement of community members.

The plan's strategies respond to the priorities identified by residents, conditions on the ground, and the needs and opportunities documented in previous plans and studies. The strategies focus both on physical PLACES in the neighborhoods and on the PEOPLE who call these places home.

Four-key pillars central to this placed-based plan organize the strategies. Each section contains a summary of the analysis on this topic followed by strategies.

- Mixed-Income Housing
- Cradle to Career Education Pipeline
- Workforce and Economic Opportunity
- Community Health and Wellness

Though 64% of households rent their homes, more than 80% of residents remain in the same home from one year to the next, according to the US Census' 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Residents describe EMMA and Beechwood as:

TIGHT-KNIT / DIVERSE / MY HOME / MY COMMUNITY / COZY

*They want to see positive change in the neighborhood, and they want to **STAY** in the community, actively involved as **AGENTS OF CHANGE**.*

*This calls for a **PLACE-BASED APPROACH** to preserve the local culture and community while working to break the cycle of poverty, foster opportunity, and revitalize EMMA and Beechwood.*



Past and Present

An Overview of Neighborhood Evolution



East Main Street, the central corridor between EMMA and Beechwood has always been a multi-modal corridor; this 1913 photo shows a cyclist, horse-drawn carriages, and street car lines.

Designs for the reconstruction of East Main Street have recently been approved, and construction will soon begin on a **\$10 million** City project to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety along this bus and auto-oriented corridor.

Looking east along East Main Street toward North Goodman Street, 1913

Source: Rochester Municipal Archives

Past and Present

Historic Land Use and Development

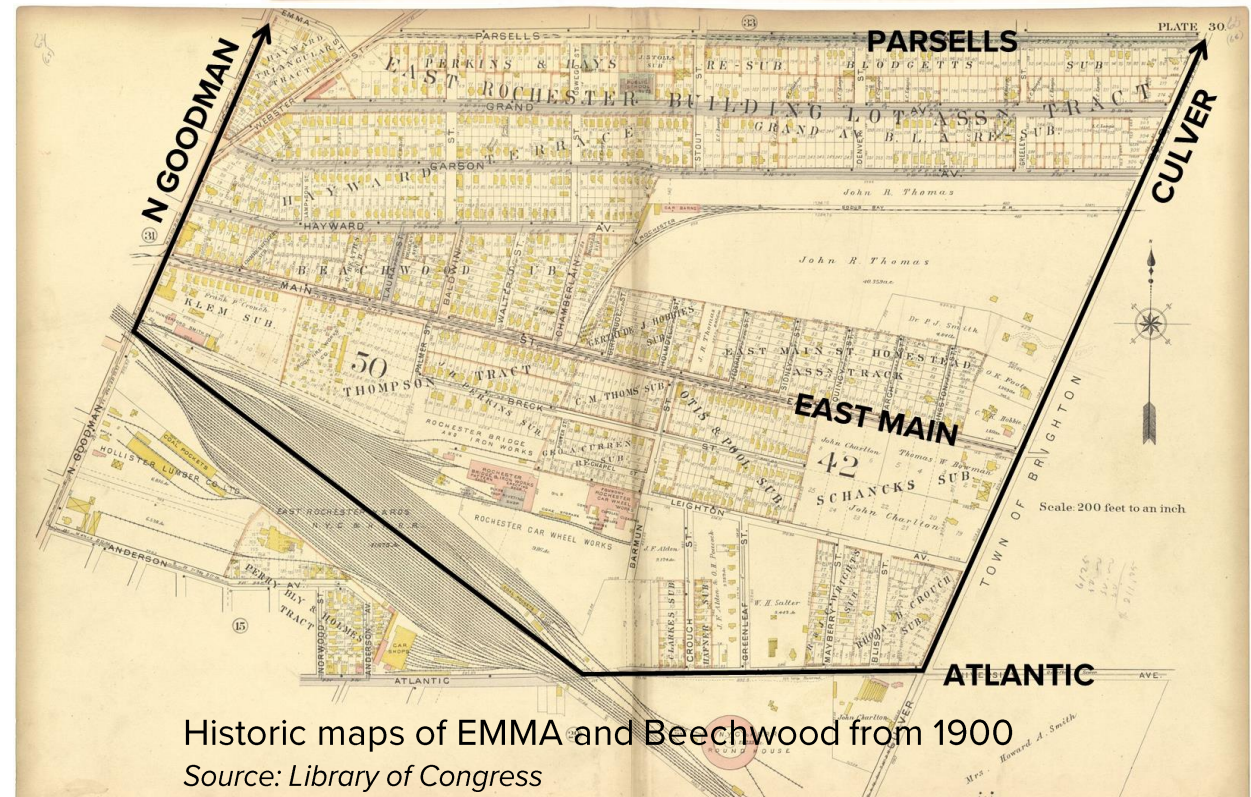
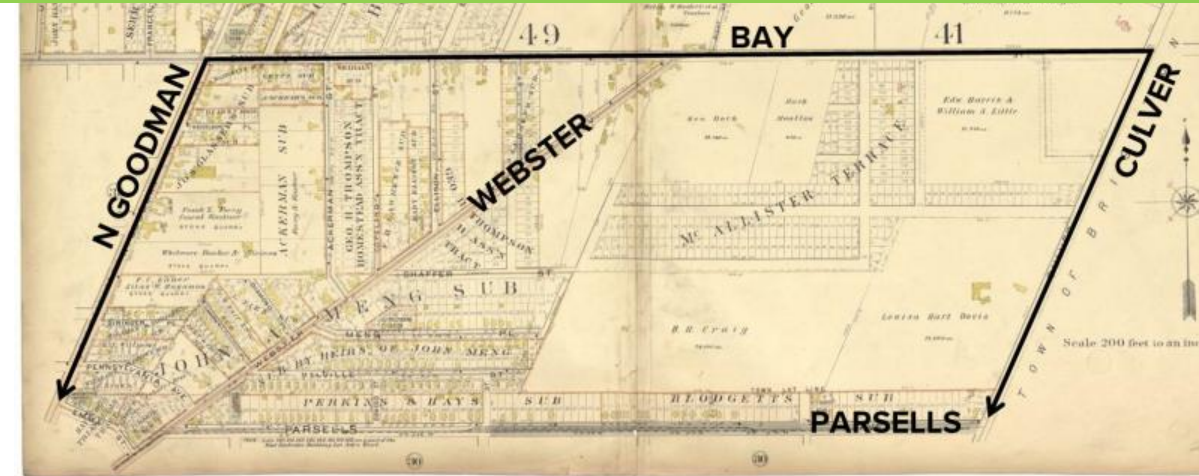
Much of the land in EMMA and Beechwood was developed by 1900, though sections to the north and east were still undeveloped at that time. The buildings marked in yellow on these maps were residential, and many of these original historic homes and street trees still stand today, contributing to the community's character, its beloved “front porch” culture, and its beautiful tree-lined streets.

The age of the housing stock and legacy of past development patterns also present challenges for community members today. Historic homes are large and costly to maintain, and cars travel too fast along the wide Parsells Avenue – formerly a street car line – endangering pedestrians and cyclists.



Street car line on Parsells Avenue, 1913

Source: Rochester Municipal Archives



Historic maps of EMMA and Beechwood from 1900

Source: Library of Congress

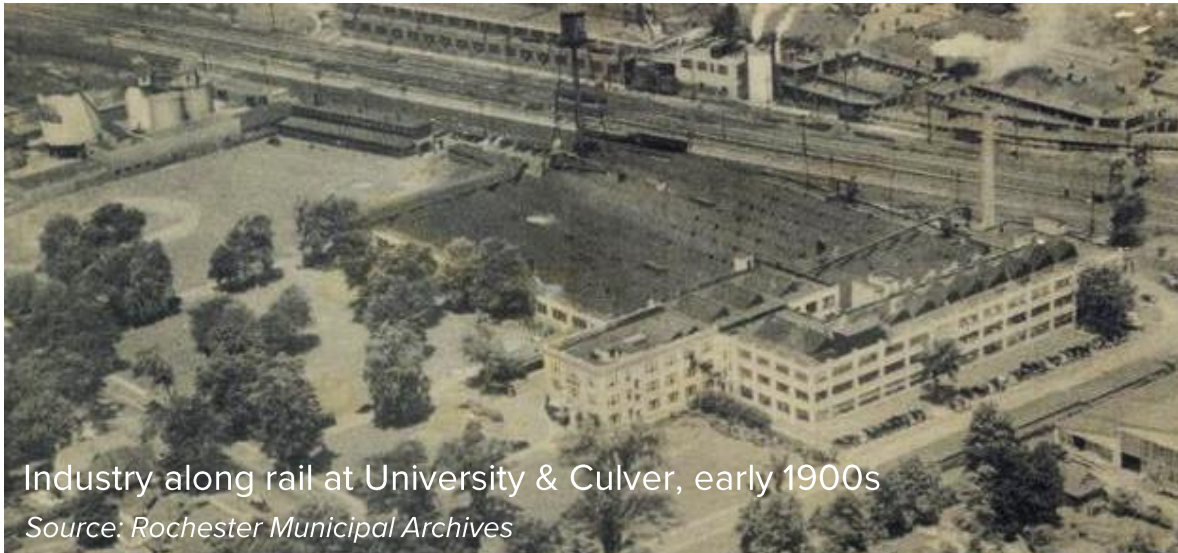
Past and Present

A Look Back In Time

Historic photos illustrate that EMMA and Beechwood were not just residential neighborhoods; they were places where many people lived *and* worked.

Industry clustered along the rail lines, and small businesses lined local commercial corridors.

Some of these industrial sites contribute to environmental justice and land use issues that constrain the reuse of key sites today.



Industry along rail at University & Culver, early 1900s

Source: Rochester Municipal Archives



A bustling commercial corridor, looking southeast at the intersection of North Goodman Street and Hayward Avenue

Source: Rochester Municipal Archives

Past and Present

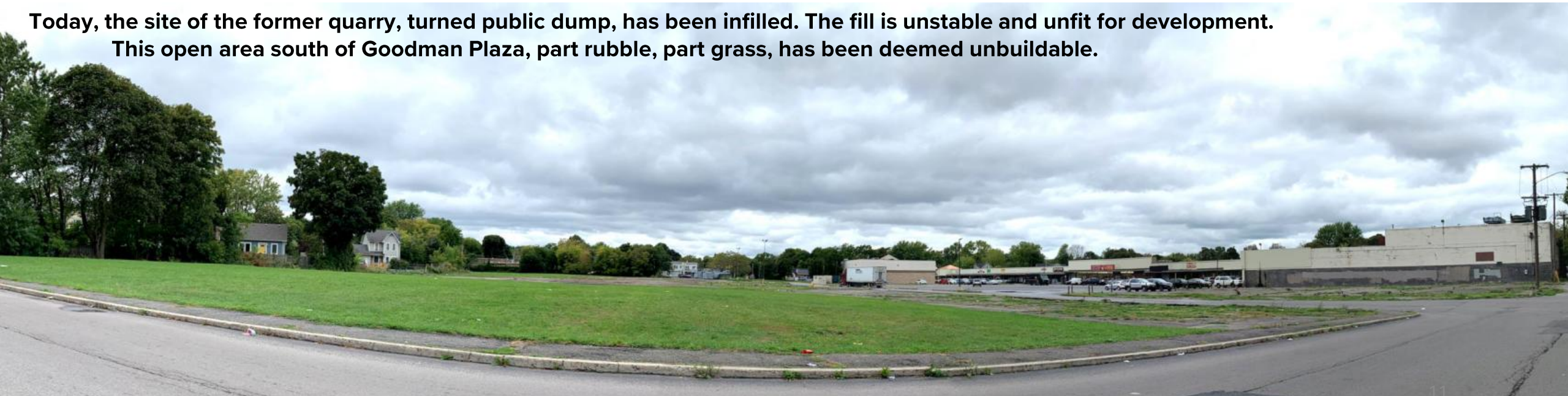
A Look Back In Time

The McLaurie Quarry at North Goodman & Bay Street later became a public dump.

View of the active quarry in 1919 (left), the drop from adjacent residential properties into the quarry (middle), and trash filling the former quarry (right).



Today, the site of the former quarry, turned public dump, has been infilled. The fill is unstable and unfit for development. This open area south of Goodman Plaza, part rubble, part grass, has been deemed unbuildable.



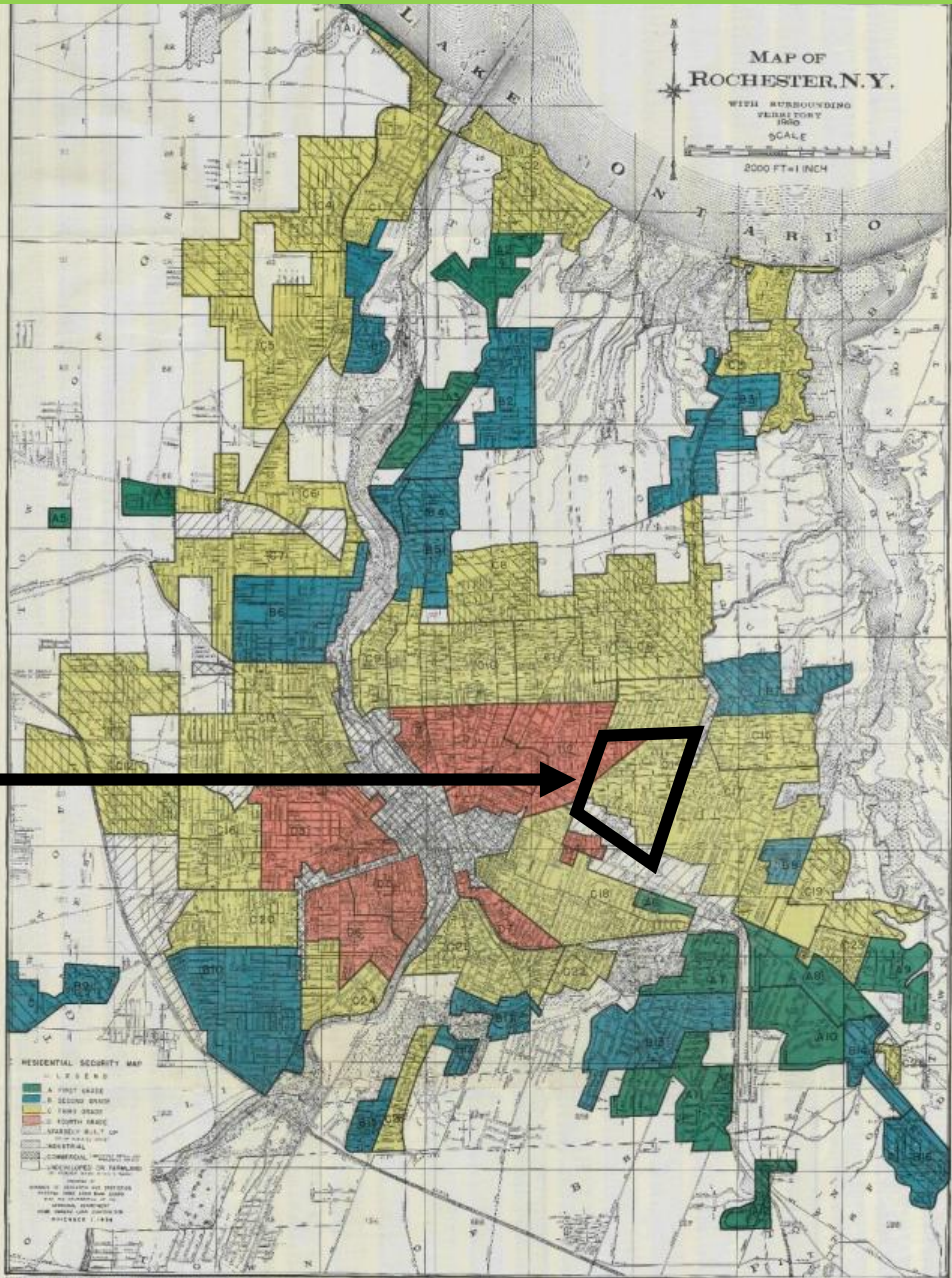
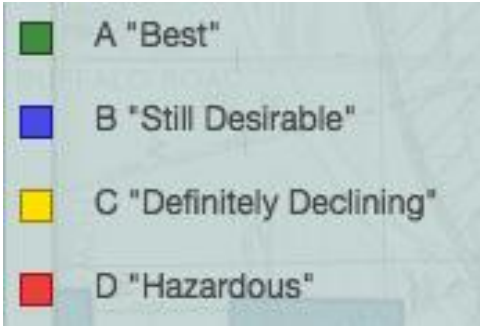
A Look Back In Time

“REDLINING”

This 1935 Home Owners Loan Corporation map details where the government and banks should and should not give mortgages.

These “redlining maps” codified racism into the fabric of American cities by restricting mortgages in neighborhoods based on the race, ethnicity, or religion of the people who lived there.

Beechwood and
EMMA



Source: Research by Shane Wiegand

Past and Present

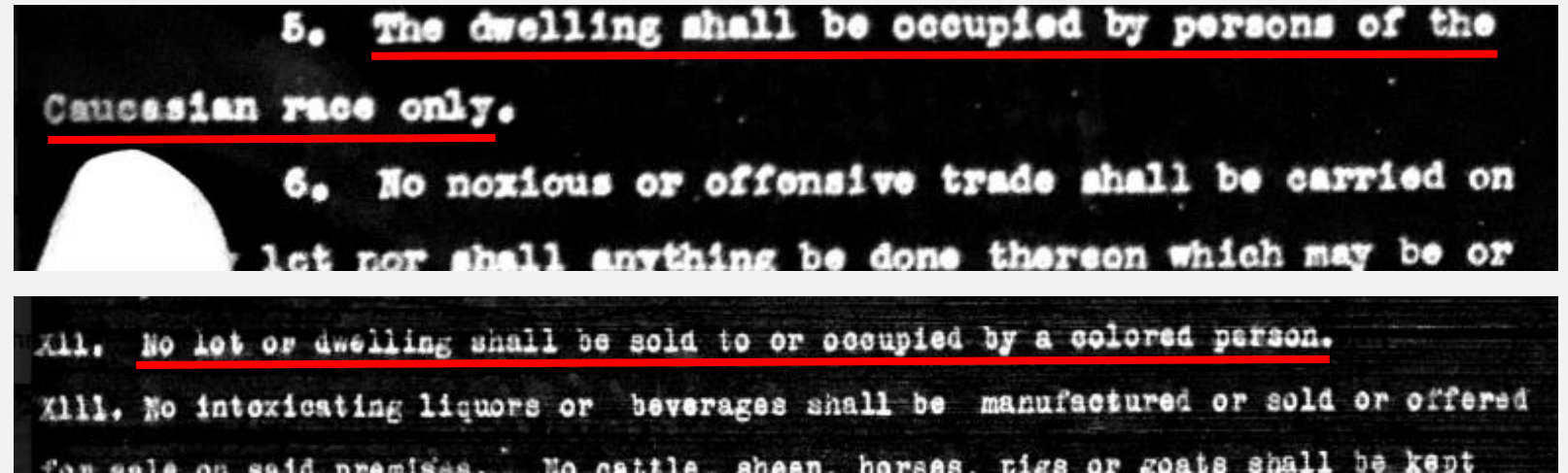
A Look Back In Time

In the not-so distant past, realtors would not sell or rent homes to black citizens in mostly-white neighborhoods. This was written into the manual of the National Association of Real Estate Boards, and it was included in the deeds to homes in what is called a “restrictive covenant.”

Reports tell of instances in which black home buyers in Rochester were intimidated and threatened by the KKK and others.

This plan must acknowledge the history and ripple effects of structural racism and work to address past injustices in the approach to evaluating current city policies and undertaking community development.

Source: Research by Shane Wiegand



Examples of actual restrictive covenants from the area.



Judge Reuben Davis (1920-2010)
First African American Rochester City Court Judge

“My wife and I were looking for a house. This was in 1958. We saw a house we liked on 135 Elmdorf Avenue in Rochester just a block or so West of Genesee Street. And I would say that there were probably four black families that lived anywhere west of Genesee Street at that time.

The owner refused to sell to us. Because we were black. There was a restrictive covenant in the deed that these houses when built were not to be sold to the colored and Italians.”

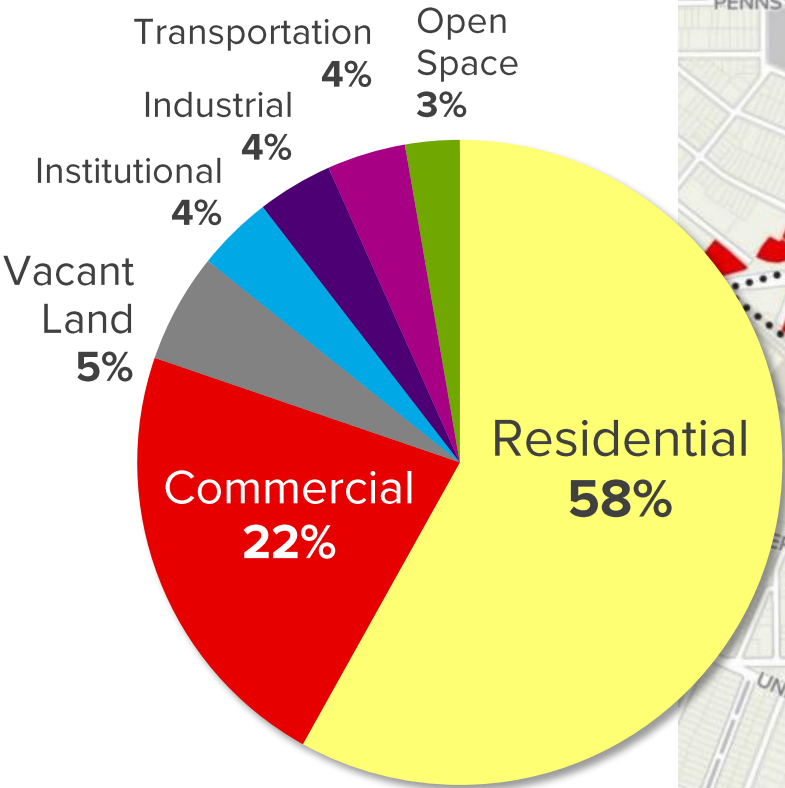
Past and Present

Land Use Today

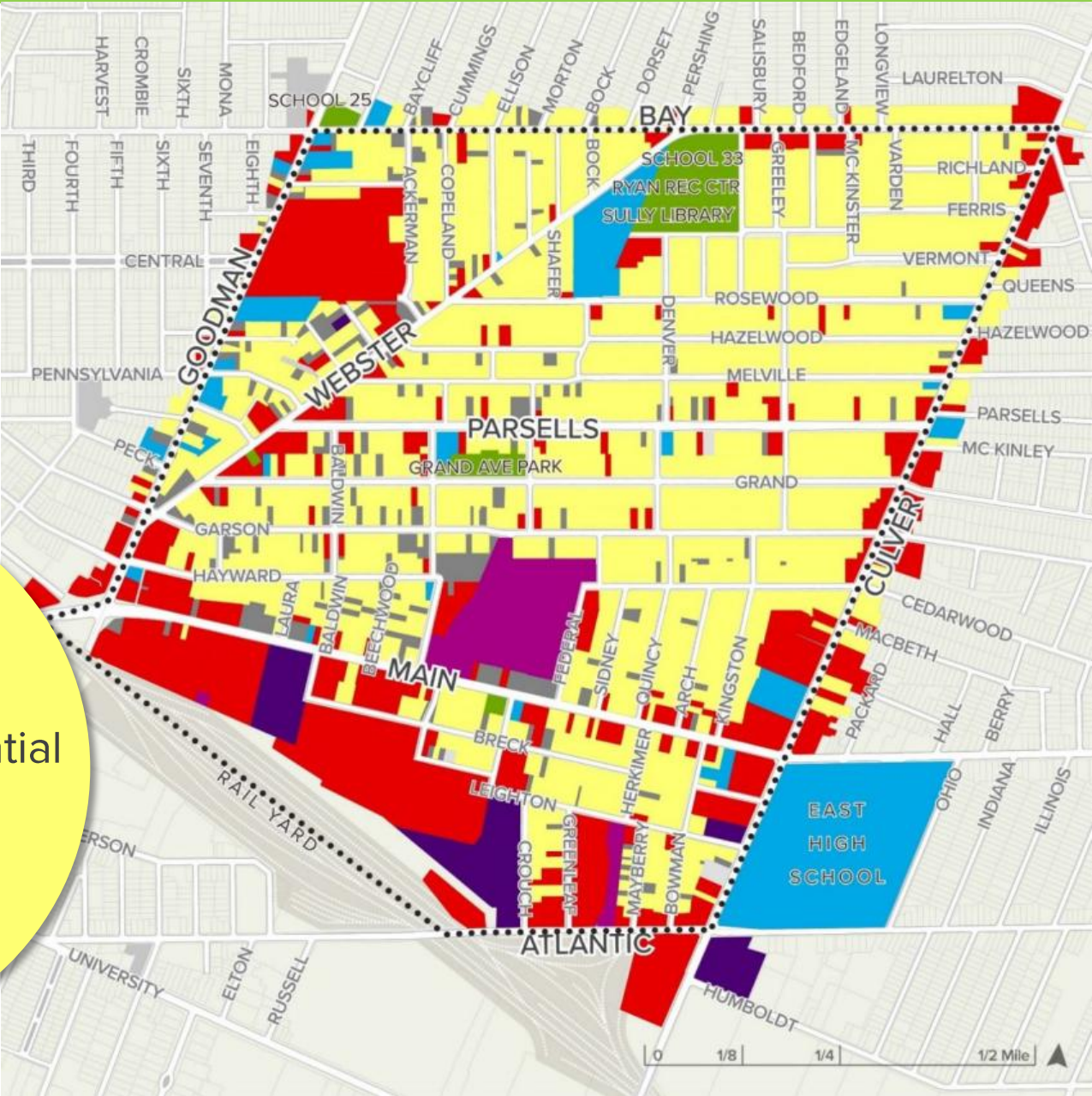
Today, EMMA and Beechwood are residential neighborhoods, framed by commercial along East Main Street, Culver, and along the rail, as well as on Webster and North Goodman.

The area includes John James Audubon Elementary School #33 and East High School, Ryan Recreation Center, and Sully Library, as well as a range of community organizations and houses of worship.

Scattered vacancy interrupts the neighborhood fabric on roughly two out of every three blocks in the neighborhood, though there are few large tracts of contiguous vacant property.



Source: City of Rochester



Past and Present

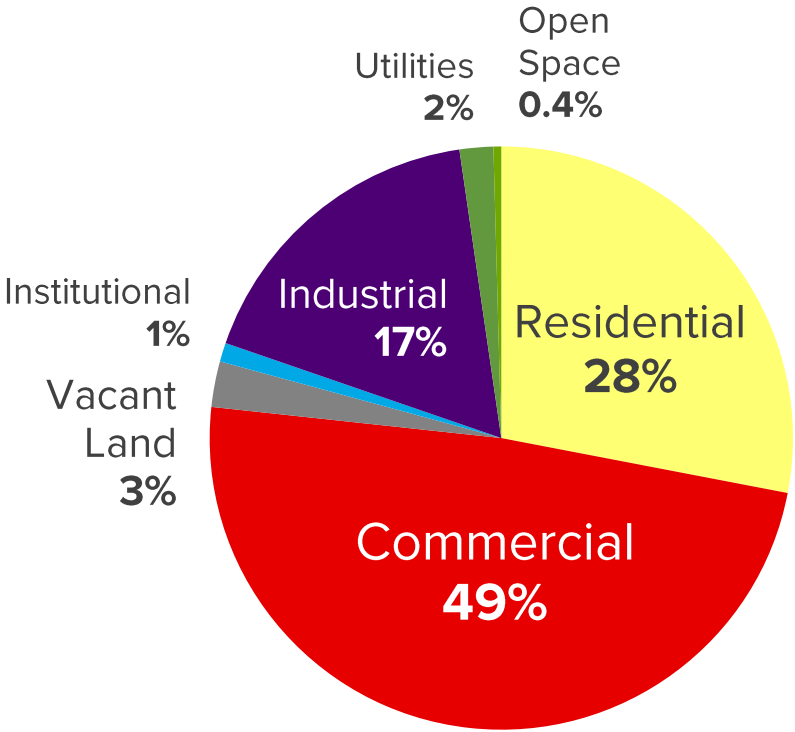
Land Use Today

This breakdown of land use by neighborhood underscores a key difference between **EMMA** and **Beechwood**.

EMMA is a smaller neighborhood, with a compact residential pocket comprising less than one-third of its total area, nestled against much larger commercial and industrial parcels along the rail line and East Main Street.

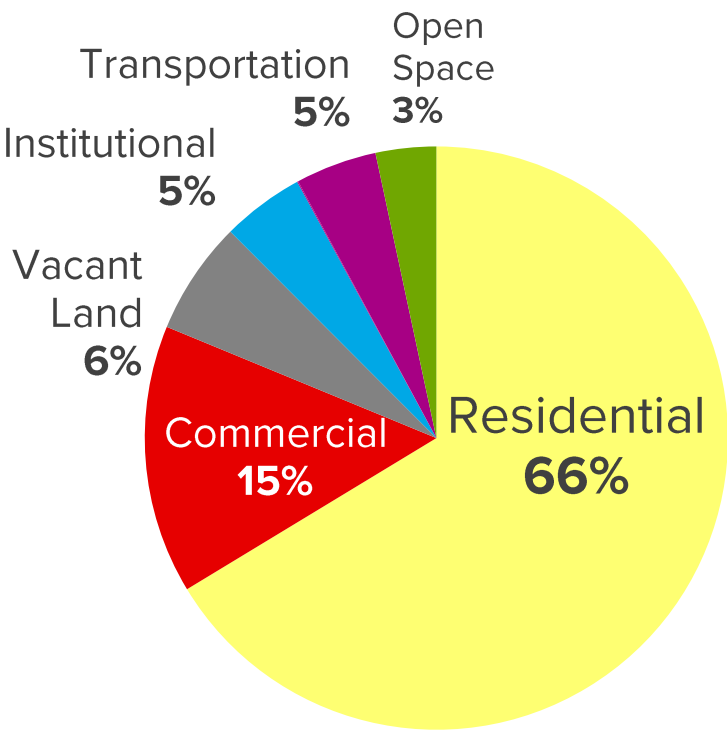
Beechwood, in contrast, is two-thirds residential, with far fewer large-scale parcels; thought two do stand out: Goodman Plaza on North Goodman and the Regional Transit Service (RTS) Headquarters on East Main Street.

PERCENT OF PARCEL AREA
EMMA



91 Parcel Acres
314 Total Parcels

PERCENT OF PARCEL AREA
BEECHWOOD



330 Parcel Acres
2,326 Total Parcels

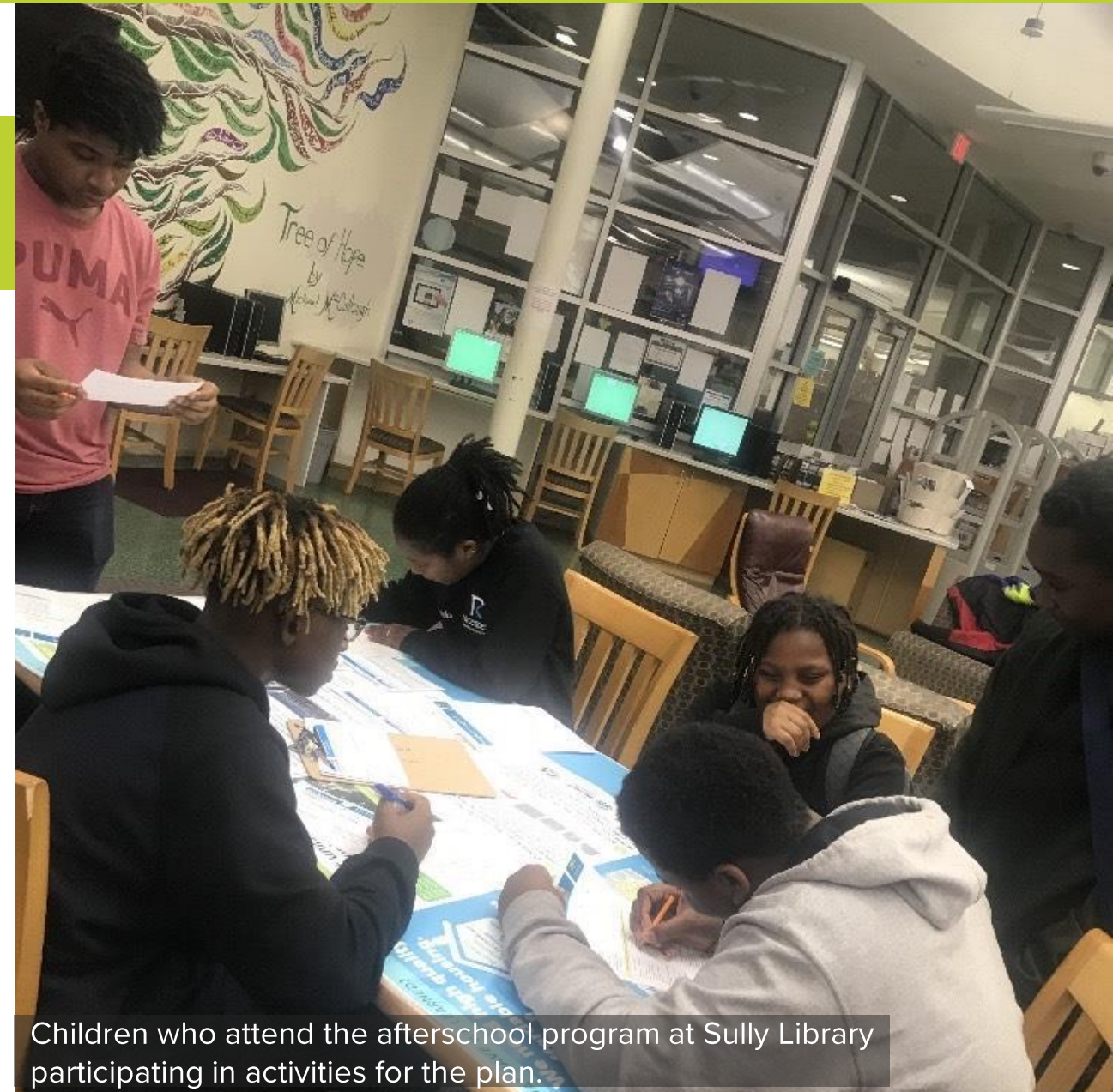
Source: City of Rochester

The Planning Process

Community, Collaboration, and Commitment

This *Comprehensive Plan for the EMMA and Beechwood Neighborhoods* builds upon the ongoing efforts of the City and local organizations, numerous prior studies and planning initiatives, a network of strong partnerships, and trusted relationships cultivated over time with and among community members.

The planning process is an opportunity to align missions, coordinate efforts, build capacity and leadership, and ensure that future change and investments are responsive to the community's shared vision for their neighborhood – their blocks and streets, parks and public spaces, and the places where they live, work, learn, play, and do business.



Children who attend the afterschool program at Sully Library participating in activities for the plan.

The Planning Process

Many partners are focusing efforts in EMMA and Beechwood.

IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Connected Communities
Beechwood Neighborhood Coalition (BNC)
North East Area Development (NEAD)
East Main, Mustard, Atlantic Avenue (EMMA)
Religious Institutions
Community Place

IN THE CITY, REGION, AND BEYOND

City of Rochester
Rochester Land Bank
Citywide Tenant Union
Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI)
Purpose Built Communities

SPECIFIC TO ONE OF THE PILLARS



Mixed-Income Housing

Rochester Housing Authority
Flower City Habitat for Humanity
Home Leasing
City Roots Land Trust
Greater Rochester Housing Partnership



Cradle to Career Education Pipeline

Rochester City School District
School #33
East High School
University of Rochester
Hillside Work Scholarship
Freedom School



Community Health & Wellness

School-Based Health Centers
Jordan Health at Community Place
Joy Family Medicine
The Ryan Center
Common Ground
The Community Place of Greater Rochester
441 Ministries
St. Mark's & St. John's
St. John Fisher College

The Planning Process

The community has done a lot of work already...

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS
& INITIATIVES

Focus Groups
on Housing,
Education,
Streets, and
Community
Revitalization

**East Main
Corridor**
Revitalization
Studies

**Door-to-door
outreach**
about East
High, School
#33, and
school choice
(continuing)

Path Forward Plan
with East High
to implement
feeder pattern
between East
and #33

Job fairs
at East High
(continuing)

School #33 MOU
with RCSD, including
public meetings

**Asset-Based
Assessment
of Health
and
Wellness,**
including
focus groups
and curb-side
Foodlink
survey

**Housing
Development
Market Study**

**East Main
Street
Improvement
Designs,**
including Oct
2018
stakeholder
meeting and
Feb 2019
public meeting

**Parcel-by-parcel
survey** of vacant land
and structures,
including conversations
with neighbors about
the future of those
parcels

**School #33
continued
outreach**

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

**Citywide
Housing
Market
Study**

**Transit
Supportive
Corridors
Study**

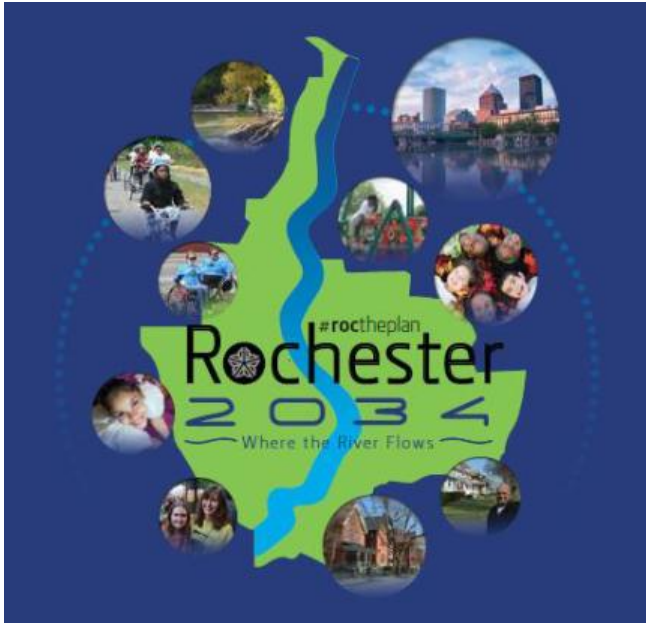
**Rochester
2034
Citywide
Plan**

CITYWIDE PLANS

The neighborhood plan marks the next important step forward.

The Planning Process

The City has just completed its Comprehensive Plan, Rochester 2034.



20 ACTION PLANS
with nearly
500 STRATEGIES!

The strategies in Rochester 2034 strive to achieve Guiding Principles:

5 POLICY PRINCIPLES

- Support Healthy Living for All
- Promote Equity and Inclusion
- Increase Resilience
- Foster Prosperity
- Work in Partnerships

6 PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES

- Design at the Pedestrian Scale
- Create Beautiful Spaces
- Provide Diverse Housing Options
- Celebrate Assets
- Strengthen Multi-Modal Travel
- Focus Growth

4 broad categories organize the Comp Plan's strategies:

Reinforcing Strong Neighborhoods

Housing, Vacant Land, Arts + Culture, Historic Preservation, Schools + Community Centers, Public Health + Safety, Community Beautification

Sustaining Green and Active Systems

Natural Resources, Parks, Recreation + Open Space, Climate Change Mitigation + Adaptation, Urban Agriculture + Community Gardens, Transportation

Fostering Prosperity and Opportunity

Economic Growth + Financial Wealth, Workforce Development, Tourism, City + Neighborhood Promotion, Smart City Innovations

Planning for Action

Implementation + Stewardship of Rochester 2034, Building Neighborhood Capacity

This neighborhood plan helps connect the broad, citywide vision to EMMA, Beechwood, and the priorities of community residents.

Each recommendation in this neighborhood plan aligns with Rochester 2034's Guiding Principles and supports one or more of the Comp Plan's strategies.

The Planning Process

Hundreds of residents have shared their ideas.

The planning process has engaged **EMMA** and **Beechwood** residents of all ages from across the neighborhood, at community events, meetings, in schools, in stores, and in residents' homes.

Meetings



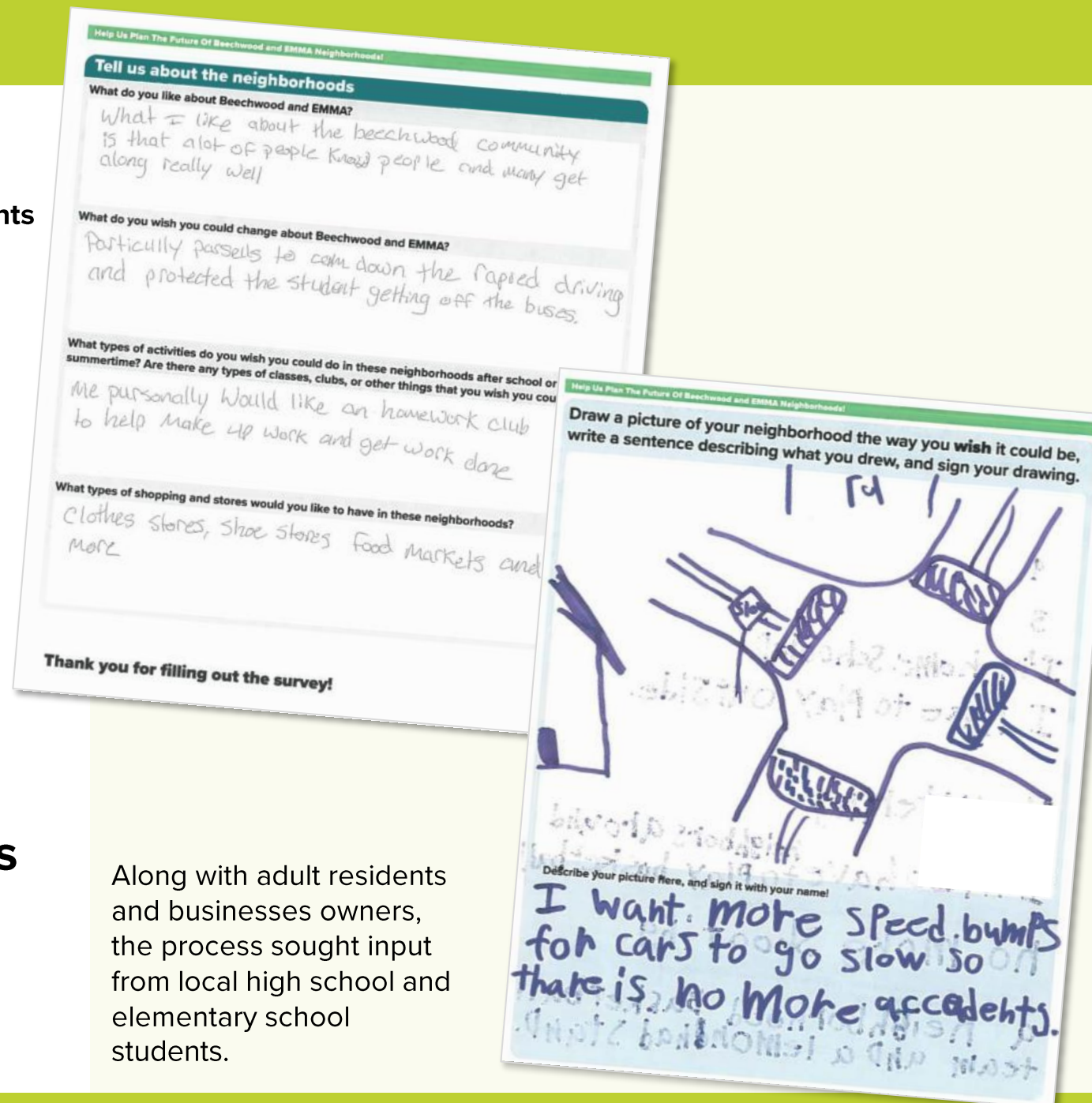
At Homes



At Schools



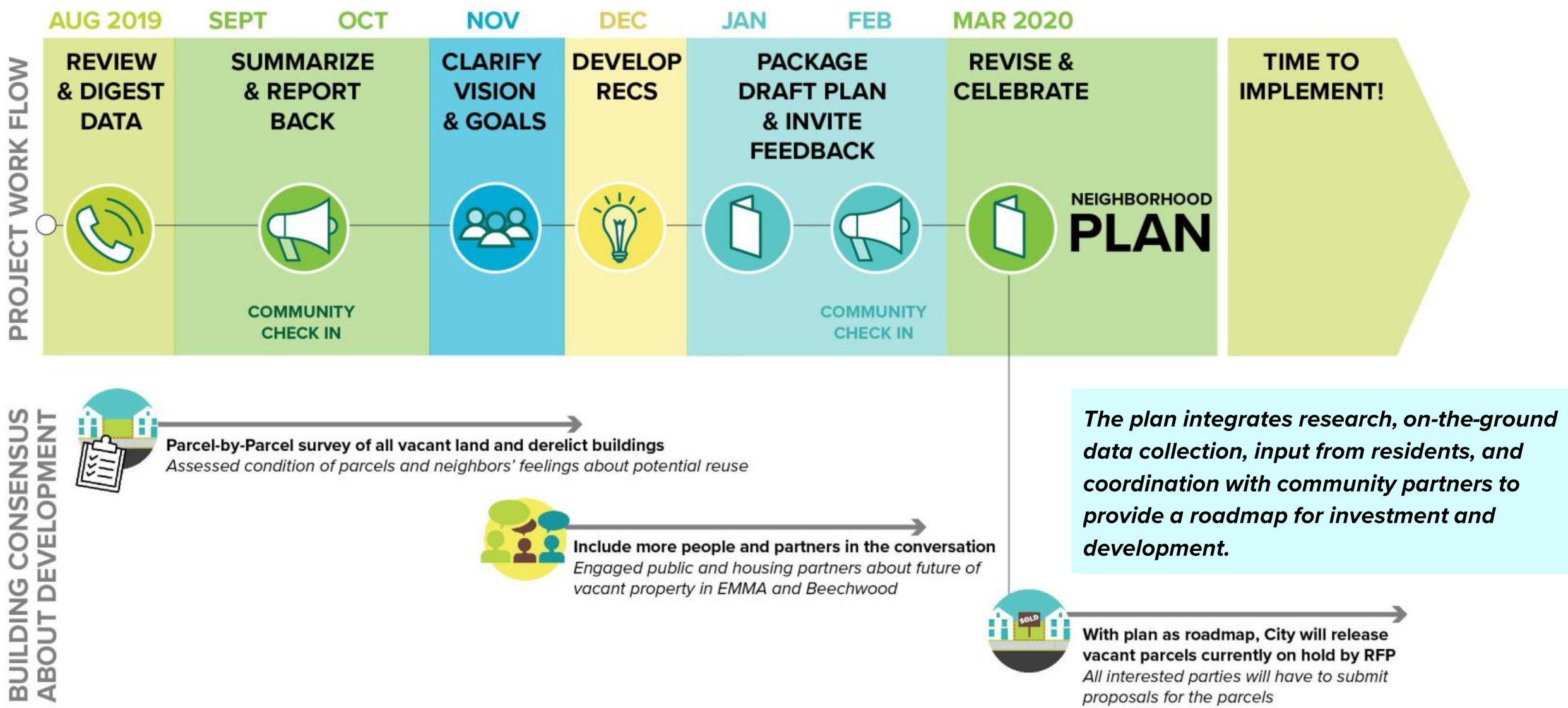
With Businesses



Along with adult residents and businesses owners, the process sought input from local high school and elementary school students.

The Planning Process

This planning process will take just under one year.



Vision and Framework

A shared vision for EMMA and Beechwood

The 2018 *Asset-Based Assessment for Health and Wellness* reports,

“EMMA and Beechwood are distinct neighborhoods and in fact comprised of smaller areas with differing levels of financial privilege and different cultures and levels of disinvestment. Beautiful trees, green spaces, walkability, longtime, caring residents and “front porch” culture are aspects of the community highly valued by residents. Racism and gentrification are concerns, with some residents suspicious of efforts by outsiders to improve the neighborhood. **Residents strongly voiced the desire to be owners of change in the area and to be not just consulted about what should happen but engaged in a continuous and thoughtful way in building upon the assets in the community.**”

The community gave voice to a collective vision for the future...



Vision and Framework

Together, we envision:

A **tight-knit** and **diverse community**, home to **neighbors of all ages** who *know each other, care for each other*, and *work together* to **preserve community culture**, **protect against displacement**, and embrace the full **promise** and **potential** of EMMA and Beechwood

A community where all residents enjoy **safe streets**, **vibrant commercial corridors**, opportunities to learn, work, and **thrive**, a **healthy** future, and a deep **sense of belonging**

A community that is growing, but **growing equitably** and **affordably** and with a **commitment to preservation** so that EMMA and Beechwood remain **home** to the residents who live here today and open and **welcoming** to our new neighbors of tomorrow

Residents offered one word to describe their neighborhood today and one word to describe their hopes for it in the future.

Their words inform the vision and goals of this neighborhood plan.

TODAY

A word cloud for 'TODAY' with 'potential' and 'community' as the largest words. Other words include 'stagnant', 'tight-knit', 'diverse', 'investors', 'home', 'hope', 'good', 'promise', 'cozy', 'intergenerational', and 'convenient'.

TOMORROW

A word cloud for 'TOMORROW' with 'growing', 'affordability', 'community', 'welcoming', and 'equitable' as prominent words. Other words include 'empowered', 'blooming', 'anti-racism', 'development', 'vital', 'great', 'forward', 'cohesive', 'safe', 'vibrant', 'culture', 'thriving', 'anti-displacement', 'permanent', 'history', 'promising', 'preserve', 'healthy', and 'better'.

Vision and Framework

Four pillars organize the plan

The plan focuses on four pillars of neighborhood success, and each pillar has a dedicated chapter in the following pages.

Each pillar’s chapter includes:

- An overview of what we have learned from prior plans, new research, and conversations with community members
- Topic-specific goals based on community input
- Recommendations for the future

Recommendations address the topics outlined to the right.

FOUR PILLARS



Mixed-Income Housing



- Rehab Strategies for Housing Preservation
- Infill and New Construction for Growth
- Tenant Advocacy
- First-Time Homebuyer Support
- Community Ownership, Leadership, and Stewardship



Cradle-to-Career Education Pipeline



- Early Childhood Education
- A Commitment to Community Schools
- Programming for Children and Outside of School Time
- Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All Residents



Workforce & Economic Opportunity



- Wealth Building
- Community Banking Services
- Supports for Existing Community Businesses
- Supports for Emerging Entrepreneurs
- Local Hiring
- East Main Street and North Goodman Commercial Corridors
- Opportunity Zone Status



Community Health & Wellness



- A Multi-Purpose Neighborhood Hub
- Traffic Calming on Key Corridors
- Community Gardening and Farming
- Grand Avenue Park
- A New Community Playground
- Temporary Programming to Activate Underutilized Space, Build Community, and Encourage Outdoor Activity

Housing

What Have We Learned?

A NEED FOR HIGH QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Everyone in EMMA and Beechwood should have access to high quality, affordable housing options – including both homeowners and renters.

THE MARKET ISN'T SUPPORTING NEW INVESTMENT

Homeowners and investors who own residential properties should feel that it is worthwhile to invest in improving their properties – and they should have access to the resources to do so.

GREAT OPPORTUNITIES AND MOTIVATED PARTNERS

A range of organizations are active in EMMA and Beechwood, working together to improve the neighborhoods. They view the vacant land as an opportunity, and this plan is one way for the neighborhoods to take advantage of that opportunity.



Housing

What Have We Learned?

EMMA and Beechwood need high quality, affordable housing, through investments in the existing housing stock, new construction efforts that increase housing choice, and new mechanisms that prevent displacement and ensure affordability over the long-term.

More than half (58%) of all households in EMMA and Beechwood are housing-cost burdened, which means they pay more than 30 percent of their income towards housing costs, including rent, mortgages, and other homeowner costs, according to the US Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates.

Cost-burdened households may struggle to pay for other necessities including food, healthcare, and transportation costs, and they may be at a greater risk for falling behind on housing payments, which can lead to eviction and loss of housing. Strategies should seek to both reduce the number of cost-burdened households and mitigate the negative effects of high housing costs on households.

Additionally, two-thirds of homes in Beechwood and were built before 1940, also according to the ACS, which means they need continual & ongoing investment to maintain and may not meet the needs of today's buyers and renters.



What Have We Learned?

Potential homeowners are drawn to higher-priced areas because they are more likely to recoup their investments there.

Investors who rent out their properties are more likely to buy very low-priced homes. 64% of homes in Beechwood and EMMA are renter-occupied. This is significantly higher than city-wide.

PRICE PER SQUARE FOOT FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOMES

Source: 2018 City of Rochester Tax Assessments, Community Development Advisors LLC, Alys Mann Consulting LLC

- \$0.00 - \$25.32
- \$25.33 - \$45.55
- \$45.56 - \$63.76
- \$63.77 - \$86.63
- \$86.64 - \$378.21



RESIDENTIAL BUILDING AND OWNER TYPES

Source: Community Development Advisors LLC, Alys Mann Consulting LLC, City of Rochester

- Investor, SINGLE FAMILY
- Investor, TWO FAMILY
- Investor, THREE FAMILY
- Investor, MULTIPLE RESIDENCE
- Owner, SINGLE FAMILY
- Owner, TWO FAMILY
- Owner, THREE FAMILY
- Owner, MULTIPLE RESIDENCE



What Have We Learned?

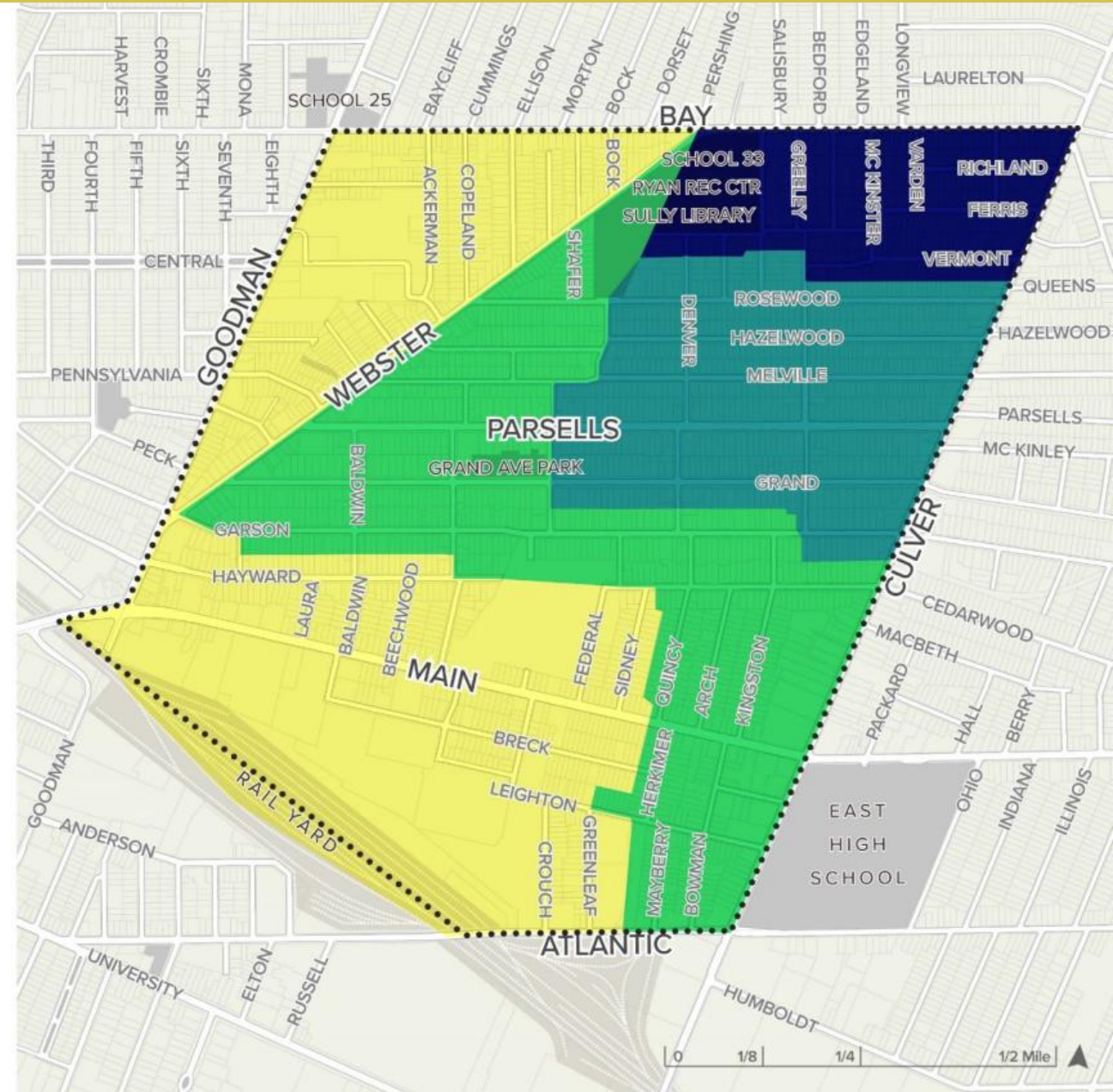
Different strategies will be necessary to make progress in stabilizing the local real estate market and encouraging growth in different areas of **EMMA** and **Beechwood**. The map to the right summarizes data on residential property sales and owner types into residential market typologies.

Strategies for each of these areas will reflect the priorities of near neighbors, the condition of homes, real estate market conditions, partner interest, and available resources.

RESIDENTIAL MARKET TYPOLOGIES

Source: Community Development Advisors LLC,
Alys Mann Consulting LLC

- Healthiest
- Transitional
- Challenged
- Significantly Challenged



What Have We Learned?

Vacancy is a major issue across EMMA and Beechwood, but it also presents a major opportunity. The City owns roughly 40% of the vacant property in the neighborhoods, and it has currently put a hold on that land pending the outcome of this planning process.

One result of this planning process will be a joint RFP from the City and Connected Communities for qualified developers to pursue projects on City-owned vacant land in line with this neighborhood plan.

Vacant Parcel Type	Parcels	Acres
City-Owned Building	3	0.4
City-Owned Land	126	14.3
Privately-Owned Building	112	12.5
Privately-Owned Land	98	10.3

In addition to City-owned vacant land, there is a significant amount of privately-owned vacancy in the community – 210 properties. Connected Communities is currently surveying these properties to determine their condition and reuse potential for accomplishing neighborhood revitalization goals.

OPPORTUNITY SITES

City-Owned

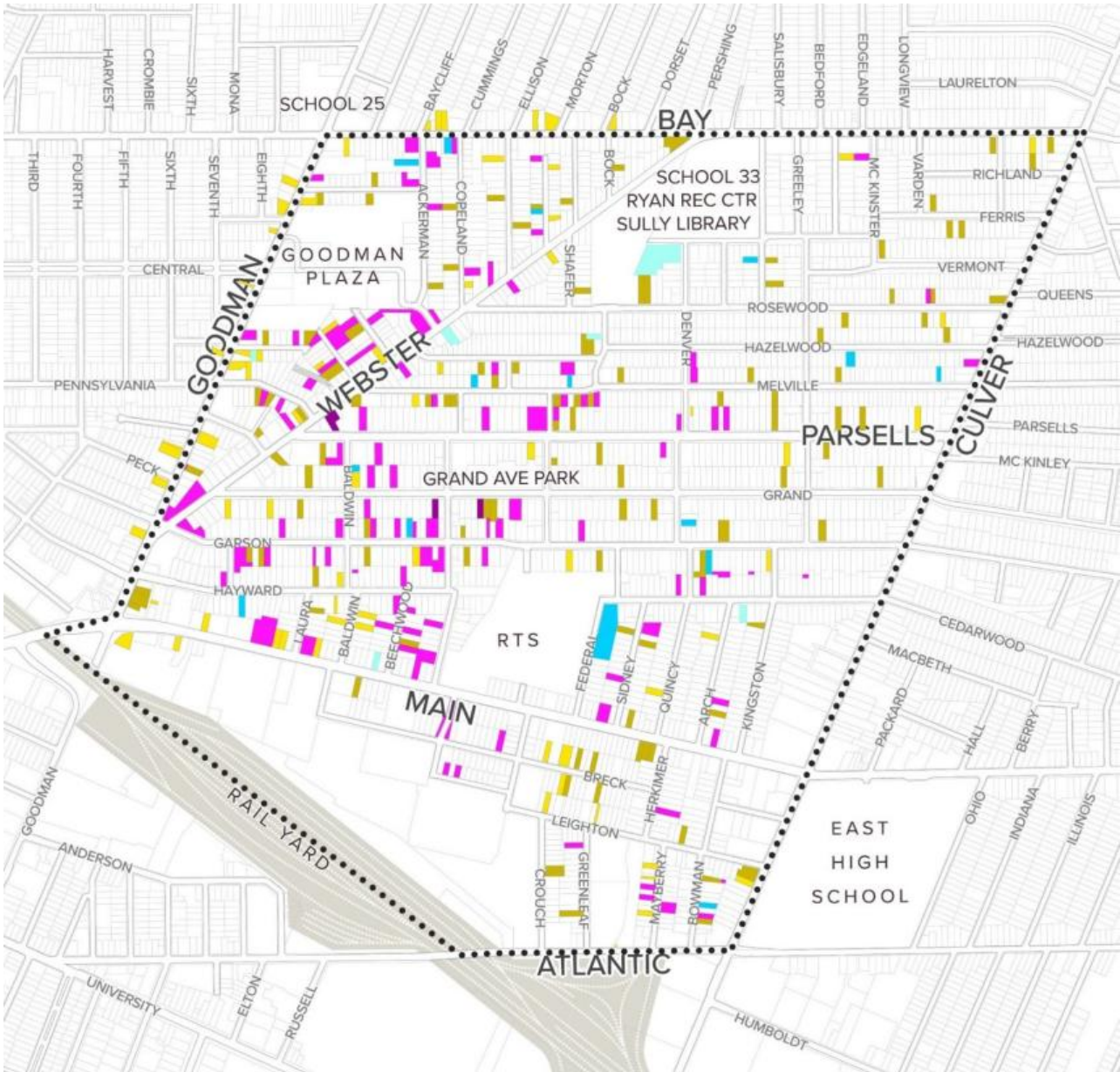
- Vacant Land
- Vacant Building

Privately-Owned

- Vacant Land
- Vacant Building

Rochester Housing Authority

- Targeted for Redevelopment
- Other RHA Parcels



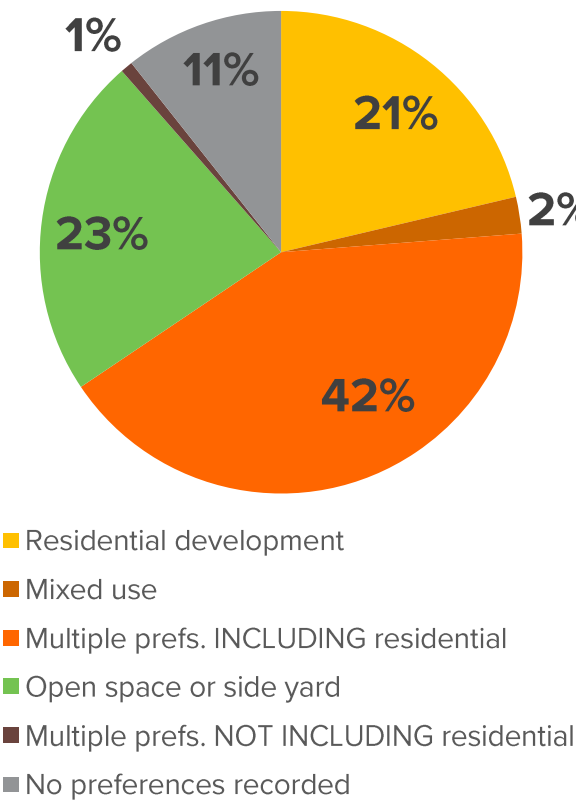
What Have We Learned?

Connected Communities has surveyed all the **City-owned vacant land in the community**. Staff has assessed the condition of each parcel in person and talked to neighbors about priorities for future reuse.

Most residents expressed interest in seeing new housing built. Many also expressed interest in a new community use, like a park or garden, and some wanted to see parcels joined to adjacent properties.

The map on the following slide displays the combined preferences of nearby residents who were consulted about each parcel and of the surveyors who observed each parcel.

A RESIDENT OR SURVEYOR PREFERRED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON 65 PERCENT OF CITY-OWNED VACANT PARCELS



Examples of Survey Results

179 Melville Street



OBSERVATIONS

- 45.62' x 80.53'
- Site: well-maintained, used by neighbors, includes sidewalk, children at play at time of observation

CONVERSATIONS WITH NEIGHBORS

- Neighbors play with their children in the lot and would like to see it joined to their property so they could fence it in and create a yard for safe play

NEIGHBOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Join with adjacent property to create side yard, or develop as a single-family home

140 Grand Avenue



OBSERVATIONS

- 50'x 149'
- Site: well-maintained, includes sidewalks
- Neighborhood: mostly well-maintained homes, yards maintained, off-street parking, feels welcoming, family residents, children playing

CONVERSATIONS WITH NEIGHBORS

- There is low crime but a lot of litter in the area

NEIGHBOR RECOMMENDATIONS

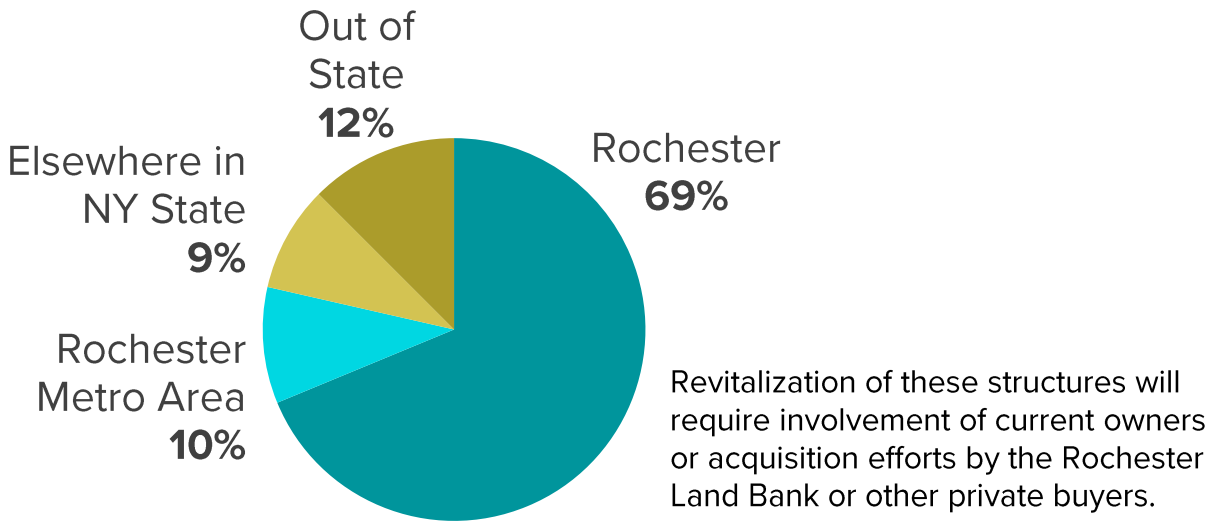
- Single-family home, or join with adjacent lot

What Have We Learned?

While the immediate opportunity is the neighborhood’s City-owned vacant land, there are also **112 privately-owned vacant buildings** and **98 privately-owned vacant lots** that may provide future opportunities for rehabilitation or new construction.

Connected Communities is in the process of surveying all privately-owned vacant buildings to determine their possible utility towards meeting housing goals. Examples of two surveyed vacant properties that could be rehabilitation candidates are shown to the right.

OWNER ADDRESS OF PRIVATELY-OWNED VACANT BUILDINGS IN BEECHWOOD AND EMMA



Examples of Privately-Owned Vacant Building Survey Results

51 Ferndale Crescent



OBSERVATIONS

- 1,826 square feet
- Built 1920
- 3 beds, 1.5 bath
- Condition: Fair roof, fair foundation, fair windows, fair porch/stoop, fair foundation, good desirability, existing curb cut, sidewalks present

CONVERSATIONS WITH NEIGHBORS

- Lot vacant for 2 years; says street is best in the neighborhood (church, lots of kids, Community Center, Rec Center)

SURVEYOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Rehab as single-family home

83 Sidney Street



OBSERVATIONS

- 1,758 square feet
- Built 1920
- 4 beds, 1 bath
- Condition: Good roof, fair siding, poor windows, fair porch, good foundation, fair desirability, existing curb cut and sidewalks, mature trees

CONVERSATIONS WITH NEIGHBORS

- Owner gave it to a relative, but she hasn't been there for a while

SURVEYOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Rehab as single-family home

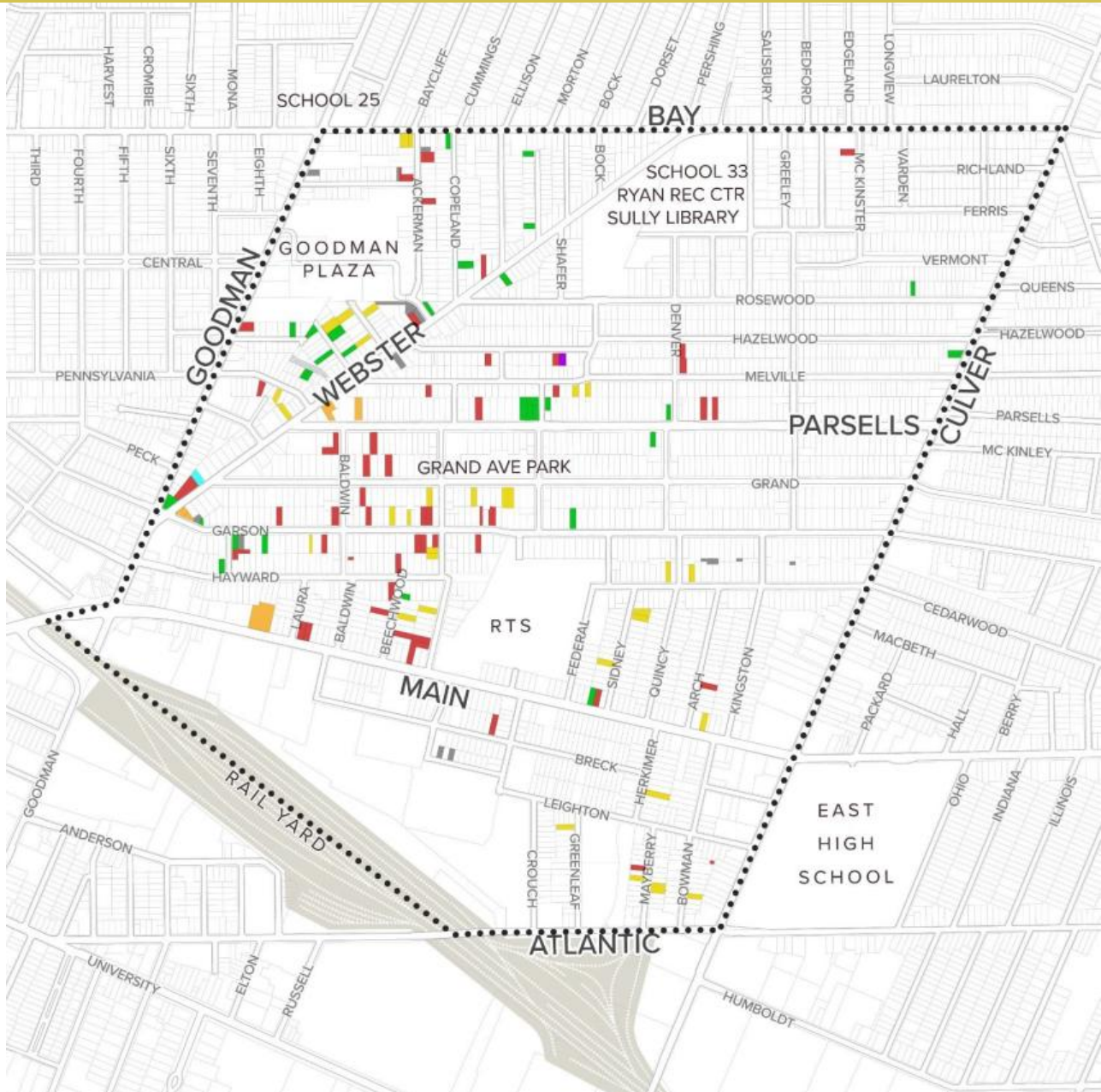
What Have We Learned?

Surveyors visited and collected data on all City-owned vacant properties in the neighborhood and talked to nearby neighbors who were available about what they would like to see on those parcels. This map depicts the combined preferences of nearby residents and surveyors. Where all preferences align, the map displays the agreed-upon preferences. Where preferences did not align, the map indicates whether any of the preferences include residential development.

As is noted on the previous slide, most residents expressed interest in seeing new housing built.

COMBINED PREFERENCES FOR CITY-OWNED VACANT PARCELS FROM SURVEYORS AND RESIDENTS

- Residential Only
- Mixed Use Only
- Open Space Only (Incl. Side Yard)
- Combine with Adjacent Parcel
- Other
- Conflicting Recommendations, Including Residential
- Conflicting Recommendations, Not Including Residential
- No Recommendations








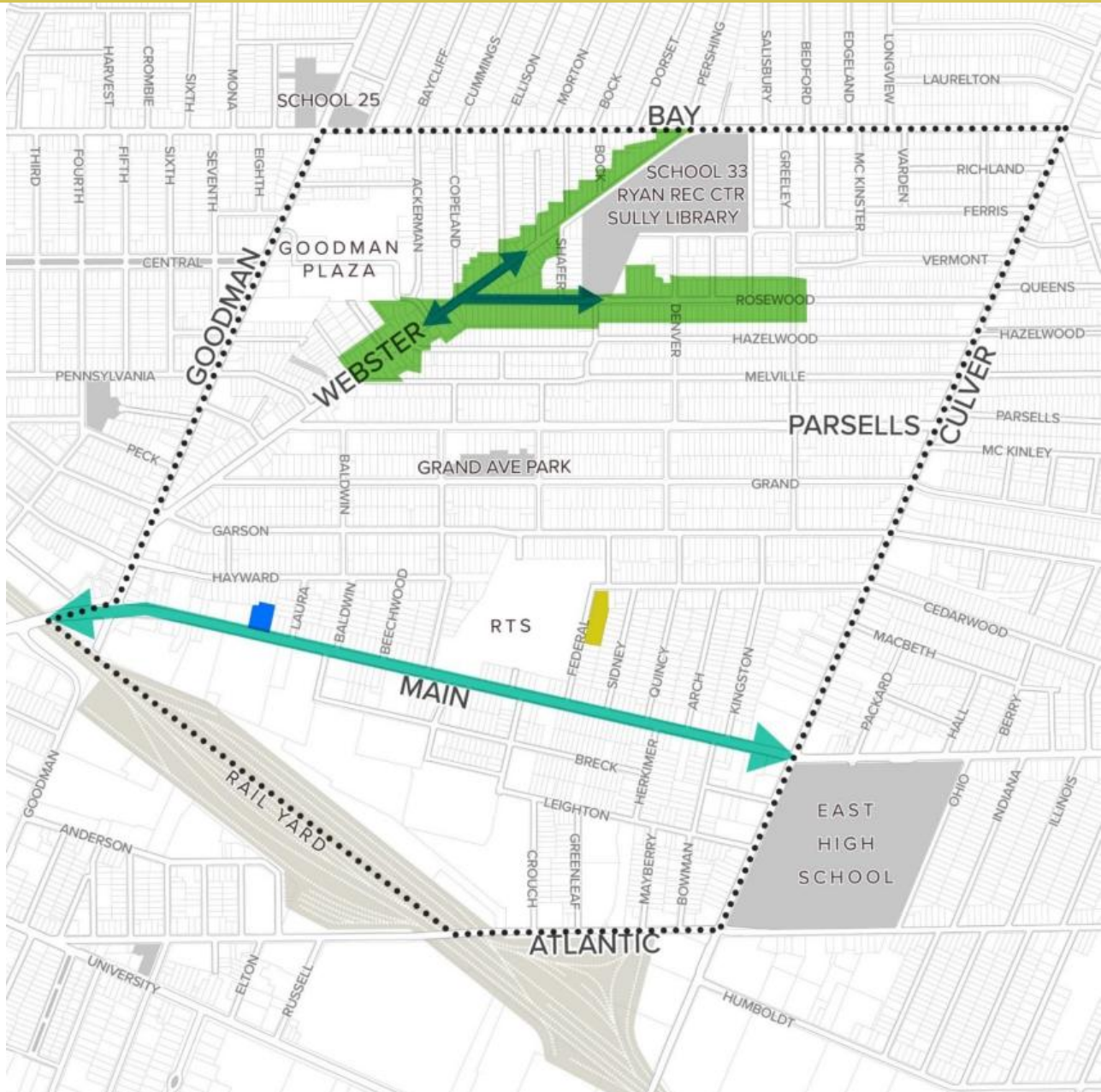
What Have We Learned?

New development in the neighborhoods will benefit from significant current and recent investments, including the East Main Street Reconstruction that is currently underway, a new police substation planned for East Main, and the City’s Focused Investment Strategy (FIS), which focused rehab and revitalization efforts along Webster and Rosewood in Beechwood.

The entire area of Beechwood and EMMA has also been designated a federal Opportunity Zone. The East Main Street section of this zone in Beechwood and EMMA has been recognized by the Rochester Economic Development Corporation (REDCO) for its potential, and Connected Communities has been called out as an organization contributing to positive growth and change in the area.

RECENT/PLANNED INVESTMENTS

-  FIS Investment Area
-  New Police Sub-Station
-  Corridor Improvements
-  RHA Federal Street Townhome Redevelopment
-  East Main Street Reconstruction / Transit Supportive Corridor



Housing

What Have We Learned?

Additionally, the Rochester Housing Authority has released an RFP for the redevelopment of the Federal Street Townhomes and other scattered RHA sites throughout Beechwood, which will significantly improve the quality of that housing and its impact on nearby properties. To locate the Federal Street Townhomes on the map, see the previous page.



Proposed elevation (left) and site plan (above) for RHA's new Federal Street Townhomes.

What Have We Learned?

The *Rochester 2034* citywide Comp Plan will also inform future development in **Beechwood** and **EMMA**. While much of the neighborhood fabric remains low density residential (single family homes), main corridors and the western portion of the neighborhoods will see opportunities for slightly greater density that fits the existing neighborhood character.

VISION FOR FUTURE Select Character Areas from *Rochester 2034*

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Flexible Mixed Use
- Vacant Property



Examples of residential character areas from the Rochester 2034 plan. Source: *Rochester 2034*



Housing

Goals for the Plan

Based on resident input, these goals have been formulated for the housing portion of this plan:

All efforts must commit to development without displacement. New development should improve the quality of life of current residents, encouraging them to stay in the community.

EMMA and Beechwood should be neighborhoods where residents can age in place, remaining an intergenerational community that is safe and welcoming for all ages.

Revitalization efforts should seek to provide a balance between growth and preservation. It is important to hold on to the culture and community that characterize the neighborhoods today while still thinking big and taking bold action.



*With the strategies that follow, Connected Communities and its partners aim to **build or restore at least 200 housing units** across Beechwood & EMMA.*

Recommendations

- 1. Reinvest in Existing Homes:** Maintain and improve current housing stock by supporting responsible homeowners, investors, and tenants and working closely with City government to advocate for selective demolition of vacant buildings.

Increase access to financial assistance for homeowners and landlords to repair & improve properties using:

- Low- or no-interest loans
- Mini-grants for facade improvements
- Lead abatement program resources

Support interested first-time home buyers with:

- Financial counseling and home-buyer education classes
- Grants or loans to help cover down payments
- Non-profit partnerships focused on housing rehab for homeownership opportunities

Encourage landlords to be responsible property owners.

- Work with the City-Wide Tenant Union and start a tenants' committee to raise awareness about tenant rights and act as a liaison between landlords and code enforcement.
- Host landlord trainings in partnership with the City to share best practices.
- Identify problematic landlords and work with them to repair their properties. If they will not, coordinate with City code enforcement to encourage improvements or sale.

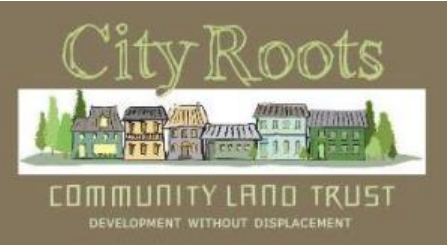
Demolish vacant buildings that cannot be repaired, and develop a strategy for reuse.

*Two-thirds of participants in public engagement activities said their block would be **impacted most of all by maintaining and improving current housing**, especially by **supporting first-time home buyers**.*



Many homes in Beechwood and EMMA would benefit from significant work, while others may be too far gone for any strategy but demolition.

Housing



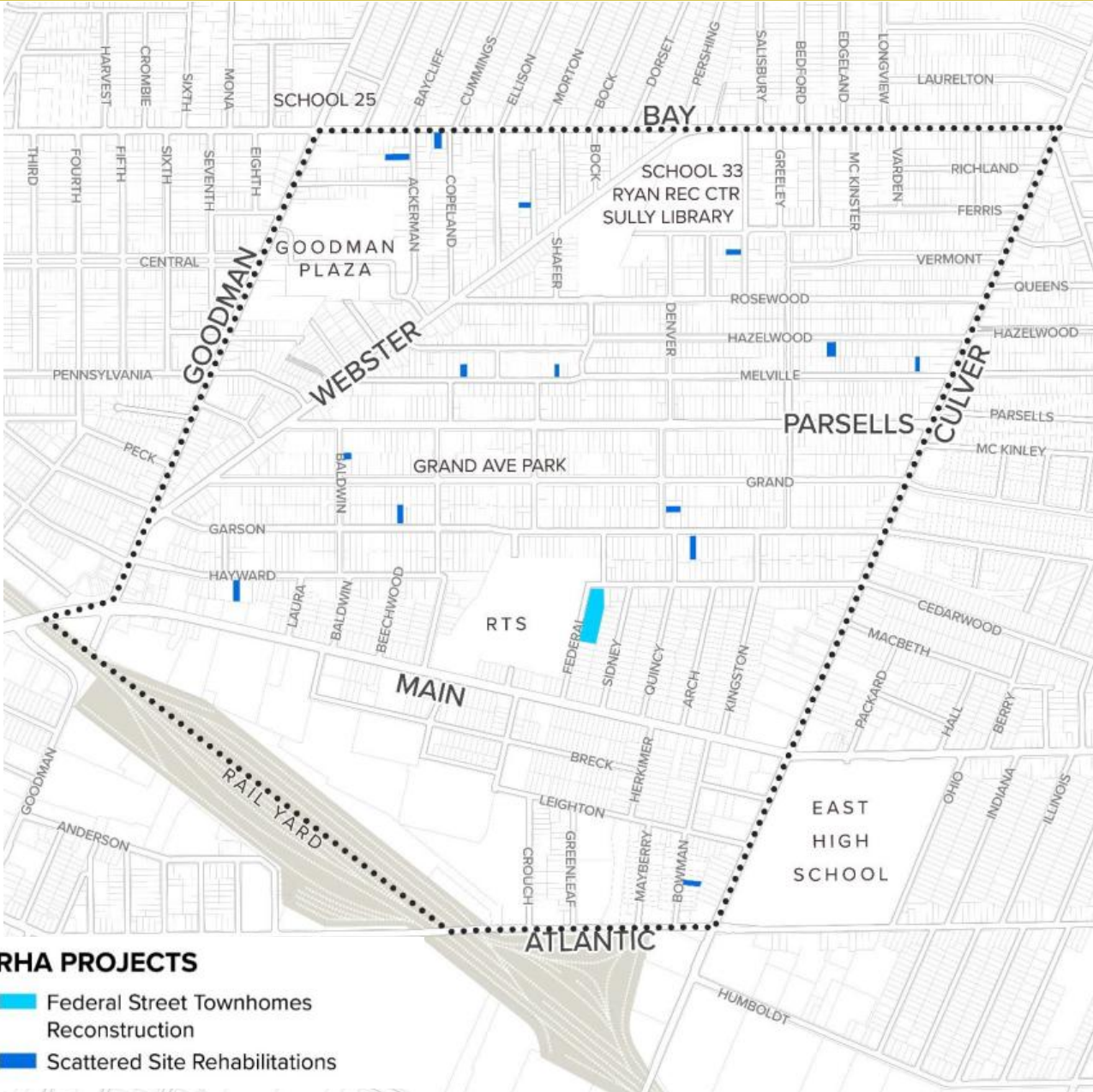
City Roots Community Land Trust is a community-driven organization working to establish and promote permanently-affordable, quality housing. They have rehabbed one home in Beechwood to date and have committed to partnering with Connected Communities to develop seven additional units within four existing unoccupied buildings in Beechwood in the coming years.



City Roots’ pilot home renovation on Melville Street
Source: City Roots Community Land Trust



The Rochester Housing Authority is also a key provider of affordable housing and partner in neighborhood revitalization. In addition to redeveloping the currently vacant Federal Street Townhomes, RHA will be undertaking significant rehabilitation efforts at 14 existing scattered site properties within EMMA and Beechwood.



Recommendations

- 2. Build New to Create Housing Choice:** Utilize City-owned vacant land to create new units of quality, mixed income housing.

Ensure that new housing provides:

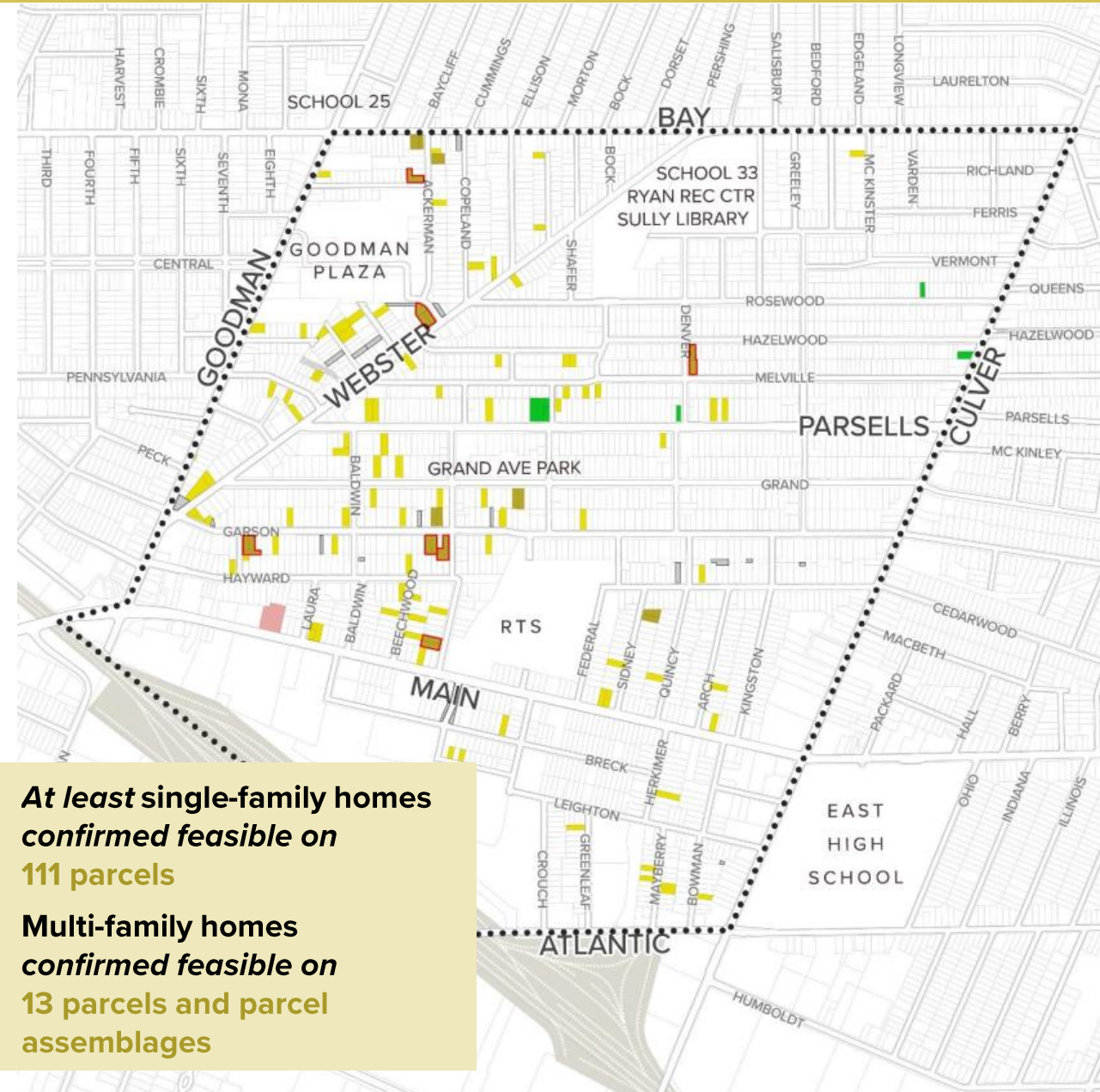
- A range of housing types for different household sizes & ages
- A range of price points for owners and renters
- New investment that complements the existing neighborhood fabric in its scale, density, and design

Support partners with the resources and capacity to build affordable housing for renters and owners, including Home Leasing, Flower City Habitat for Humanity (FCHF), and others.

POTENTIAL BUILD-OUT OF CITY-OWNED VACANT PARCELS

-  Feasibility Confirmed for at least a Single Family Structure
-  Feasibility Confirmed for a Multi-Family Structure
-  Priority Parcel Assemblage
-  Too Small For Residential Development (Less Than 35 Feet Frontage)
-  Current Community Garden
-  New Police Substation

1 in 5 participants in public engagement activities said their block would be impacted most of all by adding new units of mixed income housing across the neighborhood.



Housing



Flower City Habitat has worked with the homebuyers, volunteers, and the City to rehab or build over 235 single-family homes in Rochester. In recent years, Flower City Habitat has focused its efforts in a particular neighborhood, significantly improving quality of life and the local housing stock. Beechwood is Habitat's new focus area.

HOME LEASING

Home Leasing is a Rochester-based multi-family housing developer with two recent developments on East Main: the 72-unit Warfield Square development completed with Connected Communities and the 52-unit adaptive reuse of the historic Eastman Dental Dispensary. Home Leasing remains a committed partner, interested in continuing to invest in the EMMA and Beechwood area.

Recommendations

3. Invest in neighborhood improvements that will increase safety and build community pride and positive buzz.

- Host resident-led community-building events, such as community clean-ups, tree planting days, or beautiful front porch or yard competitions.
- Improve streets and parks with more trees, lighting, benches, and decorations.
- Explore opportunities to repurpose vacant property and reconnect Diringer, Diamond, and Lamont Place to improve circulation, safety, and the market for vacant parcels on what are currently dead-end streets.

*When asked which recommendations would **most impact their household**, support **increased slightly** for **beautification**, among participants in public engagement activities, though most still believe improving housing will have a greater impact.*



- Partner with RTS and residents to bring artistic, locally-inspired treatments to the blank exterior walls around the RTS facility. Explore a partnership with the Rochester organization WALL/THERAPY.



Not all walls are treated equally: the blank RTS wall (top) and a mural titled “Blessings for La Comunidad” created by La Moreña Art with WALL/THERAPY in Beechwood on East Main near Goodman (bottom).

Recommendations

- 4. Cultivate Local Leadership:** Work with residents to organize, advocate, and take action.

Offer organizing and advocacy trainings for known and emerging neighborhood leaders.

Create mini-grants that residents can apply for to improve the neighborhood with their own ideas.

Support the creation of block clubs, and work with them to achieve their goals.

- 5. Foster Community Control and Sense of Place:** Pursue alternative approaches to enhancing a shared sense of ownership among homeowners and tenants, alike.

Support increased community control of land through developments that partner with City Roots Community Land Trust.

Recruit residents to collaborate with local historians and architects to inform designs for new housing and public realm improvements that reincarnate and celebrate neighborhood history and culture.

Maintain an active role for Resident Ambassadors as plan implementation moves forward.



Community-led projects, such as the Complete Streets Makeover at Greeley and Parsells, build a sense of ownership and pride.



Resident Ambassadors at a community dinner.

Summary of Recommendations

The Housing portion of this plan includes recommendations for rehabilitation of existing homes, construction of new mixed-income housing, and public realm interventions that will support the housing market.

City-owned vacant parcels have been surveyed across the neighborhood, and the feasibility of low- and medium-density structures has been assessed for most parcels. In some cases, multi-family structures may be feasible on more parcels than are currently flagged in the map to the right. Some parcels will need to be combined to support multi-family structures.

Existing community gardens have been called out for preservation; though consideration should be given to the fact that the community has expressed interest in seeing more parcels devoted to gardening.

A new road connection should be explored near Goodman Plaza to reduce the number of dead end streets, where the market for vacant parcels is weak and safety issues have been called out by the community.

POTENTIAL BUILD-OUT OF CITY-OWNED VACANT PARCELS

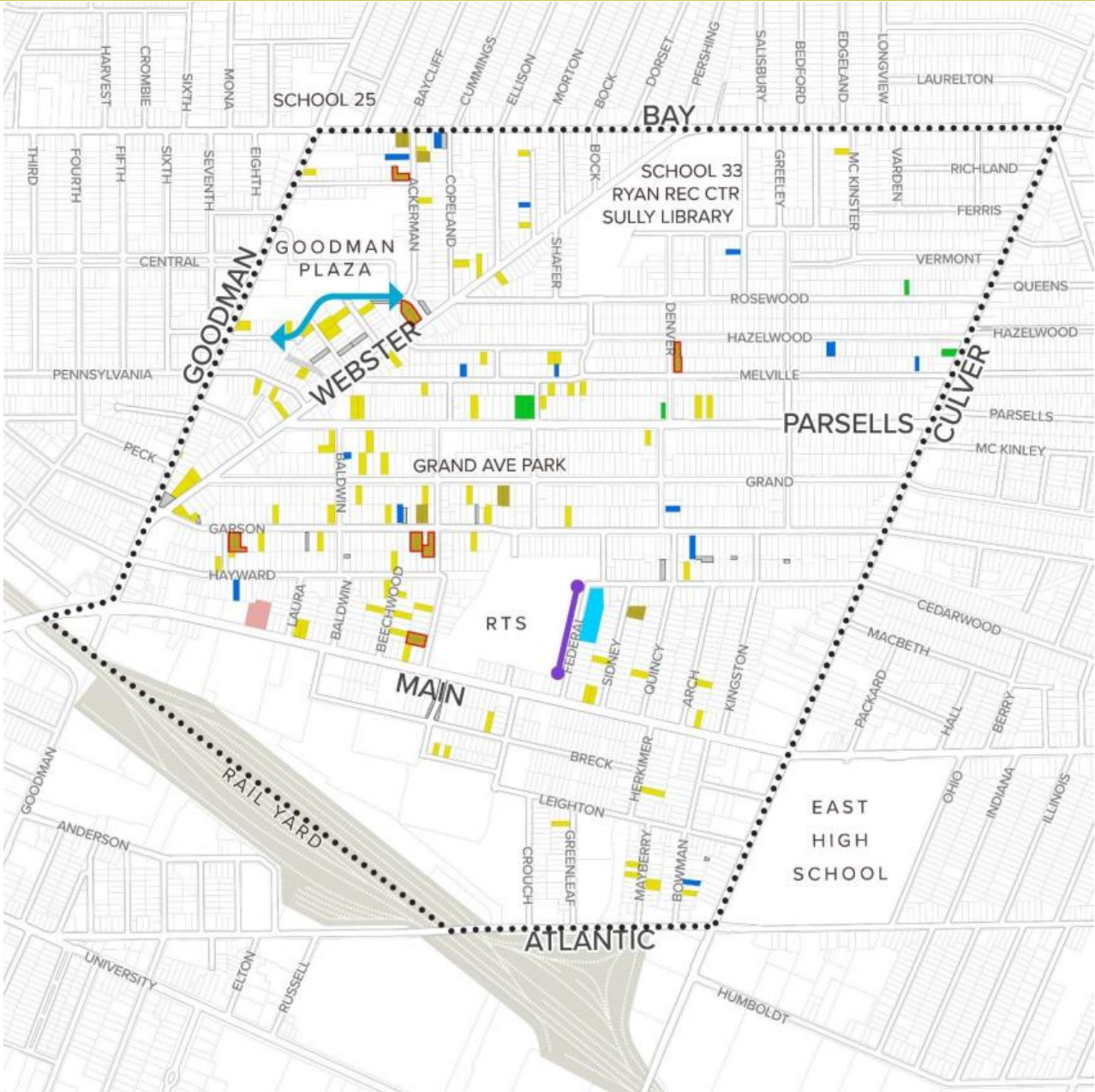
- Feasibility Confirmed for at least a Single Family Structure
- Feasibility Confirmed for a Multi-Family Structure
- Priority Parcel Assemblage
- Too Small For Residential Development (Less Than 35 Feet Frontage)
- Current Community Garden
- New Police Substation

RHA PROJECTS

- Federal Street Townhomes Reconstruction
- Scattered Site Rehabilitations

ADDITIONAL INTERVENTIONS

- Study Feasibility of New Road Connection
- Artistic Wall Treatment



Education

What Have We Learned?

WE NEED STRONGER EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES.

- **A third (36%) of Beechwood residents are under 18, compared to a quarter (24%) of residents citywide.** In Beechwood and EMMA together, there are over 2000 school-age children.
- **Only 14% of school-age kids living in Beechwood and EMMA attend either School #33 or East High.**
- **A quarter (26%) of Beechwood and EMMA adults (25 and over) have less than a high school degree.**

THERE ARE ALREADY POSITIVE SIGNS OF PROGRESS.

- **In 2018, the Rochester City School District and Connected Communities entered into an agreement to make School #33 a Community School,** which will become a hub for education, programs, and social / health / family services for students, families, and neighborhood residents.
- **Beginning in 2014, East High has partnered with the University of Rochester's Warner School of Education to improve student outcomes.** So far, the results are positive, as test scores are rising, graduation rates are up, and disciplinary actions are going down.



School #33, looking towards Downtown Rochester.
Source: Rochester City School District

What Have We Learned?

A lot of work has already been done to establish School #33 as a successful Community School.

Neighborhood Canvassing

- Engaged 31 guardians in a door-to-door survey about issues of parent voice and priorities in Summer 2019
- Resulted in the identification of key insights into neighborhood families' needs and perceptions of School #33, especially the importance of bussing within 1.5 miles of the school, school safety, proactive communication from the school, and easily accessible resources to parents to learn more and get involved

School and Community Outreach

- Resulted in the development of a system for capturing continuous feedback from families
- Identified the need for parent education opportunities
- Developed a community partners resource guide to facilitate more effective collaboration with current and future partners

Community Partner Outreach

- Identified and engaged current school partners about the role of the community school
- Established schedule for ongoing engagement and development of coordinated systems for meeting students and family needs

Implementation Evaluation

- Established a partnership with the Warner School of Education at the University of Rochester to evaluate the community school model at School #33

Early Childhood Development Program needs study

- Working to ensure kindergartners arrive at School #33 ready to thrive
- Needs study completed by Childcare Council, identifying early childhood program capacity in the neighborhood



Students arriving at School #33.

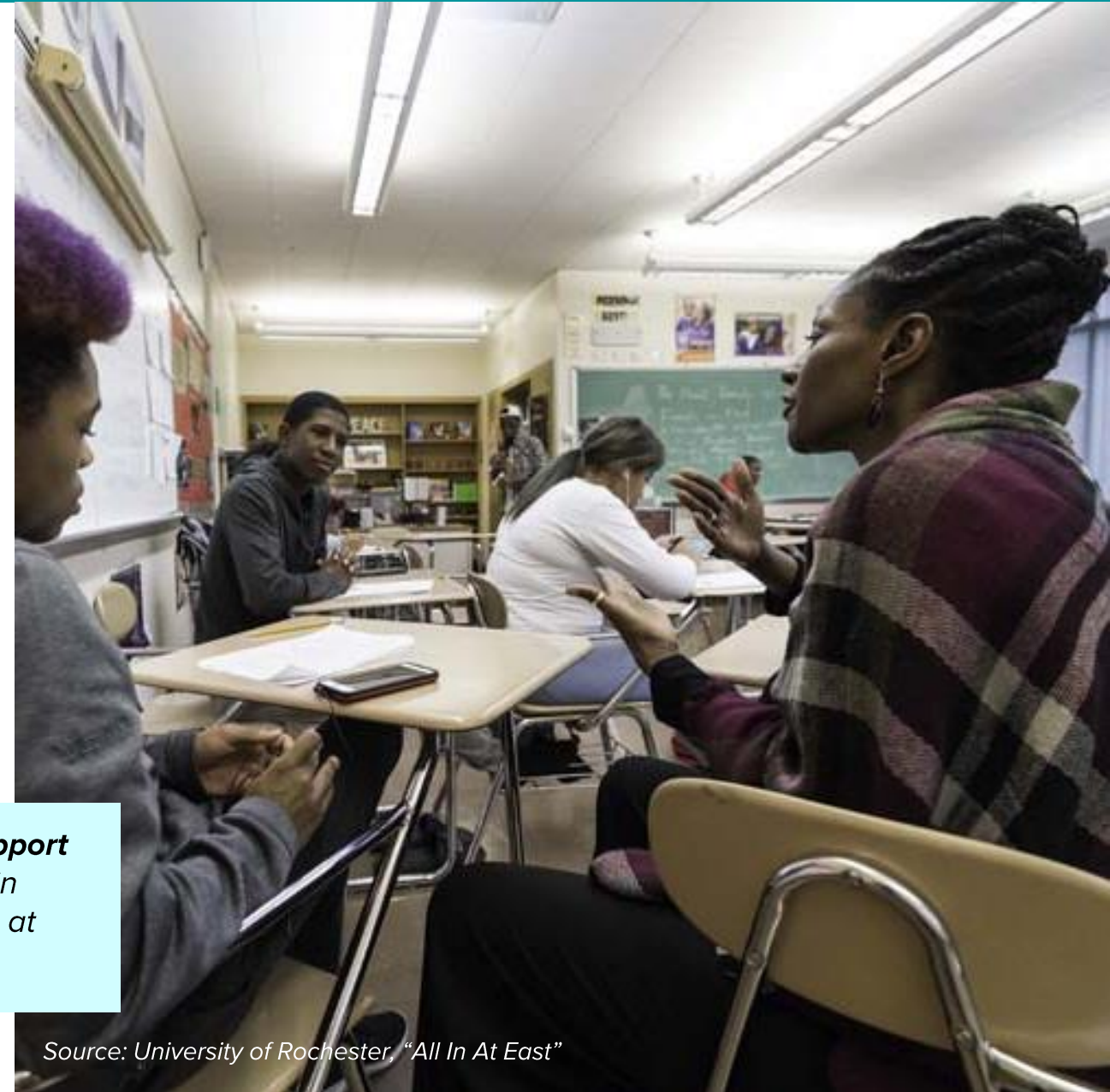
What Have We Learned?

East High has made tremendous progress towards better serving its students.

From the 2015-16 school year to the 2018-19 school year, the graduation rate at East High increased from 33% to 70%.

This huge leap has effectively reduced the cost to graduate a single student from \$67,200 to \$38,302, according to the Superintendent's November 2019 "East Update."

Students mentioned liking all the support they get from teachers at East High in engagement efforts for this plan done at the school.



Source: University of Rochester, "All In At East"

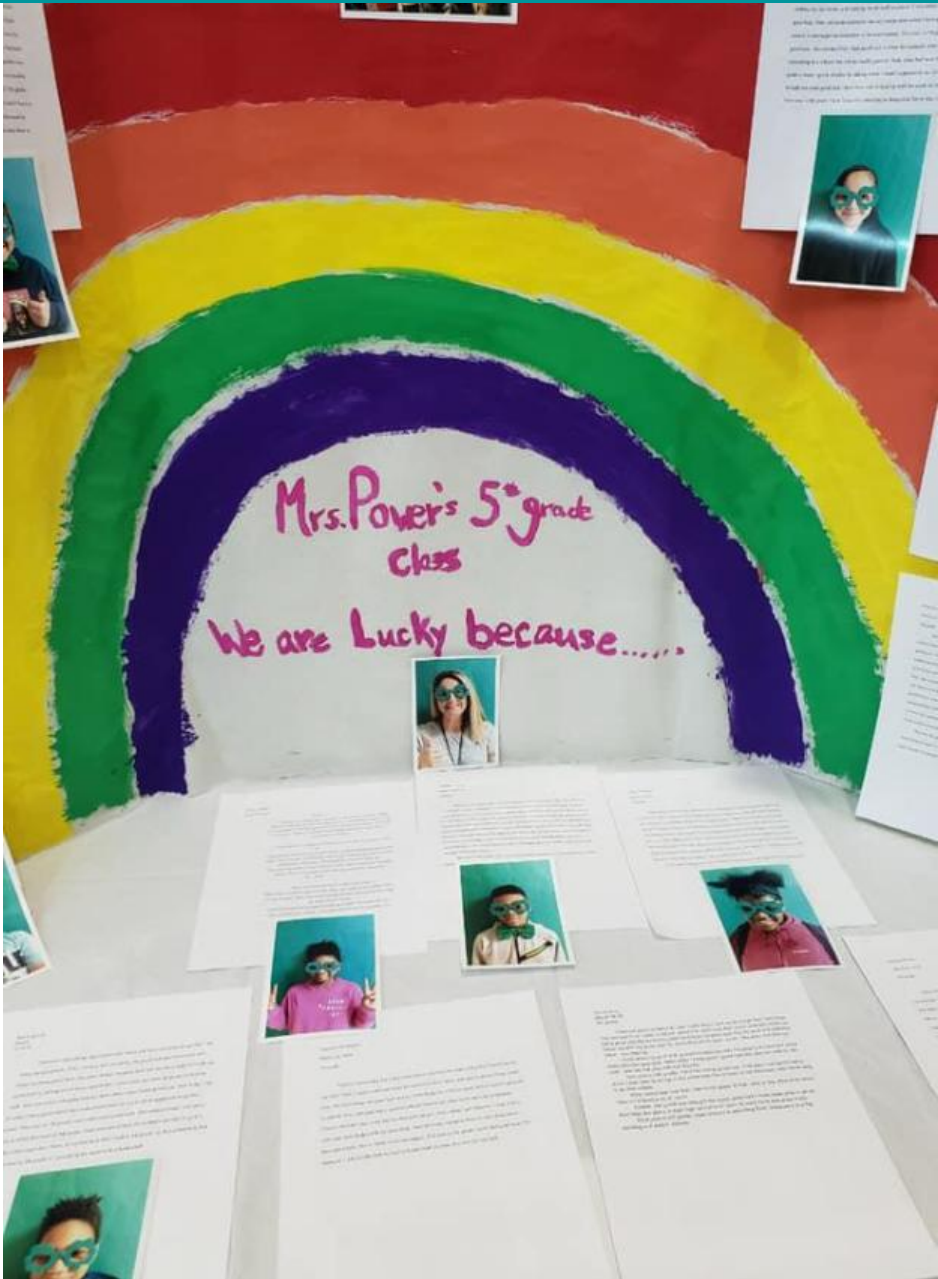
Education

Goals for the Plan

Based on resident input, these goals have been formulated for the education portion of this plan:

Every Beechwood and EMMA child should have the opportunity to attend a high-quality local community school that provides an excellent education and quality services.

Local children, families, and adults should have access to ongoing educational opportunities and services in a central, welcoming location within the neighborhood.



Recommendations

1. **Establish School #33 as a successful community school.**

Encourage more local families to send their kids to the school.

Continue engaging parents to co-design a comprehensive Community School Needs Assessment. Help parents become more involved in their children's educations through parent education opportunities and outreach

Continue enhancing community partner collaboration through regular discussions and coordination around service provision and parent & student engagement.

Evaluate the School #33's progress as a Community School with the Warner School of Education as a partner.

2. **Ensure access to quality early childhood education so that neighborhood Kindergarteners arrive at school ready to thrive.**

Establish relationships / partnerships with childcare facilities in the neighborhood. Identify and advocate for neighborhood enrollment priority for their afterschool and summer programs.

3. **Continue efforts to strengthen the feeder pattern between School #33 and East High School.**

4. **Foster pathways from East High School to college and careers.**



School #33 kickoff with kids, parents, and tables from local partners.

Recommendations

5. Provide opportunities for kids to continue learning after school and during the summer months.
6. Connect neighborhood adults with programs that encourage lifelong learning.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

The top activities that residents and high school students expressed interest in seeing for neighborhood youth were

- **sports and recreation,**
- **tutoring, and**
- **art & trade skills**

ADULT ACTIVITIES

The top activities that residents expressed interest in seeing for neighborhood adults were

- **parenting and life skills,**
- **career prep,**
- **financial skills, and**
- **general education**



The 2019 “Day of Caring” brought arts programming to kids and adults.

Economic Opportunity

What Have We Learned?

WE ARE WORKING TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY

- **42% of all residents and 57% of neighborhood children live in poverty.**
- **Nearly 1 in 5 EMMA and Beechwood residents in the labor force are unemployed (19%),** compared to 13% in the City and 7% in the County.
- **Rochester ranks among the lowest cities in the nation in terms of credit access.** In the EMMA and Beechwood ZIP Code, which includes a more affluent area across Rochester's city line, **11-14% of residents are not included in the credit economy.** For those in the credit economy, **45% are in subprime borrowing arrangements.**
- **More than 11% of residents in the EMMA and Beechwood ZIP Code (14609) are consistently delinquent on debt and credit payments;** this rate likely understates local credit stress, as 14609 includes a more affluent area across Rochester's city line.
- Access to credit and safe banking services, coupled with financial counseling, workforce development, and pathways to economic opportunities & jobs that pay a living wage are critical for residents.

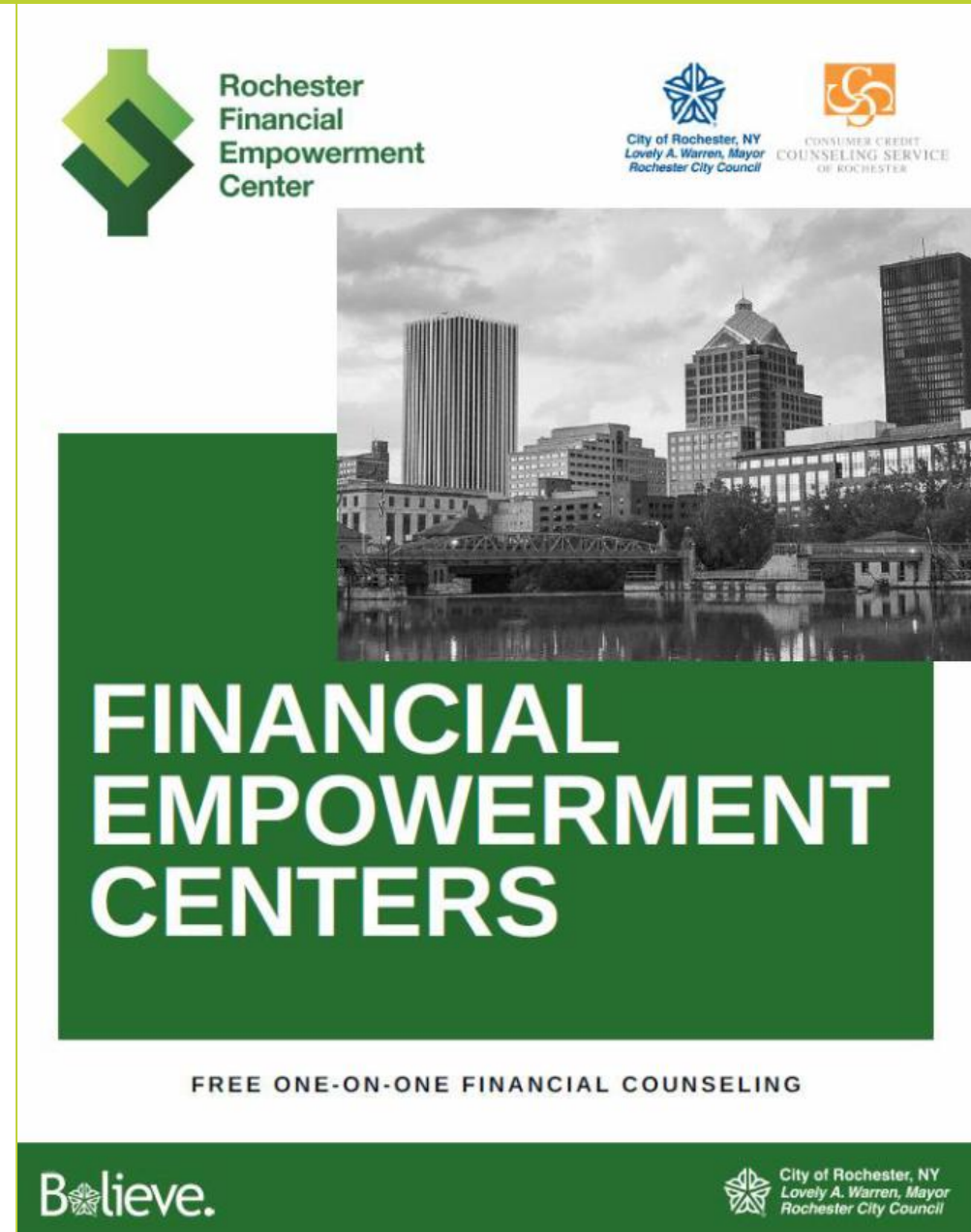


441 Ministries runs a teen mentorship program at New City Café on Parsells Avenue. *Source: City Newspaper*

What Have We Learned?

THE CITY OF ROCHESTER IS A KEY PARTNER. CURRENT CITY EFFORTS SUPPORT WEALTH BUILDING FOR RESIDENTS AND NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

- **The City launched a network of Financial Empowerment Centers** to provide free, professional, one-on-one financial counseling as a public service to improve financial health and increase access to safe and affordable banking services. They are interested in partnering with Connected Communities to open a storefront location in the EMMA and Beechwood area.
- **The pending reconstruction of East Main Street will retrofit EMMA and Beechwood's shared commercial corridor**, making it more pedestrian and bicycle friendly and better suited for economic development efforts that support small, local businesses.
- **Mayor Warren has announced a new initiative focused on investing in commercial corridors outside of downtown.** New resources will go toward pre-development costs and support services for community entrepreneurs & worker-owned co-ops.
- **Beechwood and EMMA have been designated a federal Opportunity Zone.** This provides preferential tax status to funds invested in certain low-income communities nationwide. The East Main Street section of this zone in Beechwood and EMMA has been recognized by the Rochester Economic Development Corporation (REDCO) for its potential, and efforts are underway to attract development activity.



The poster features a green and white color scheme. At the top left is the Rochester Financial Empowerment Center logo, a stylized green 'F' shape. To its right are the logos for the City of Rochester, NY (a blue star) and the Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Rochester (an orange 'C' shape). Below these logos is a black and white photograph of the Rochester skyline, including the High Tower Building and the Rochester City Hall, reflected in the water. The main title 'FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT CENTERS' is written in large, bold, white capital letters on a green background. Below the title, the text 'FREE ONE-ON-ONE FINANCIAL COUNSELING' is written in smaller, white capital letters. At the bottom left is the 'Believe.' logo, and at the bottom right is the City of Rochester, NY logo with the text 'Lovely A. Warren, Mayor' and 'Rochester City Council'.

Rochester Financial Empowerment Center

City of Rochester, NY
Lovely A. Warren, Mayor
Rochester City Council

CONSUMER CREDIT COUNSELING SERVICE OF ROCHESTER

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT CENTERS

FREE ONE-ON-ONE FINANCIAL COUNSELING

Believe.

City of Rochester, NY
Lovely A. Warren, Mayor
Rochester City Council



Savings

Plan for the future and prepare for unforeseen expenses



Debt

Pay down debt and develop budgeting tools



Credit

Establish and build credit with professional guidance



Banking

Gain access to safe and affordable bank accounts

What Have We Learned?

The city has made specific recommendations for the future of East Main Street in its 2019 Commercial Corridor Study.

Among other things, the study recommends furniture and home furnishings stores, electronics and appliance stores, health and personal care stores, clothing and accessories stores, and restaurants. The study argues that a “blended auto and pedestrian character” will best serve the larger-scale corridor.

LAND USE

Source: City of Rochester

Commercial

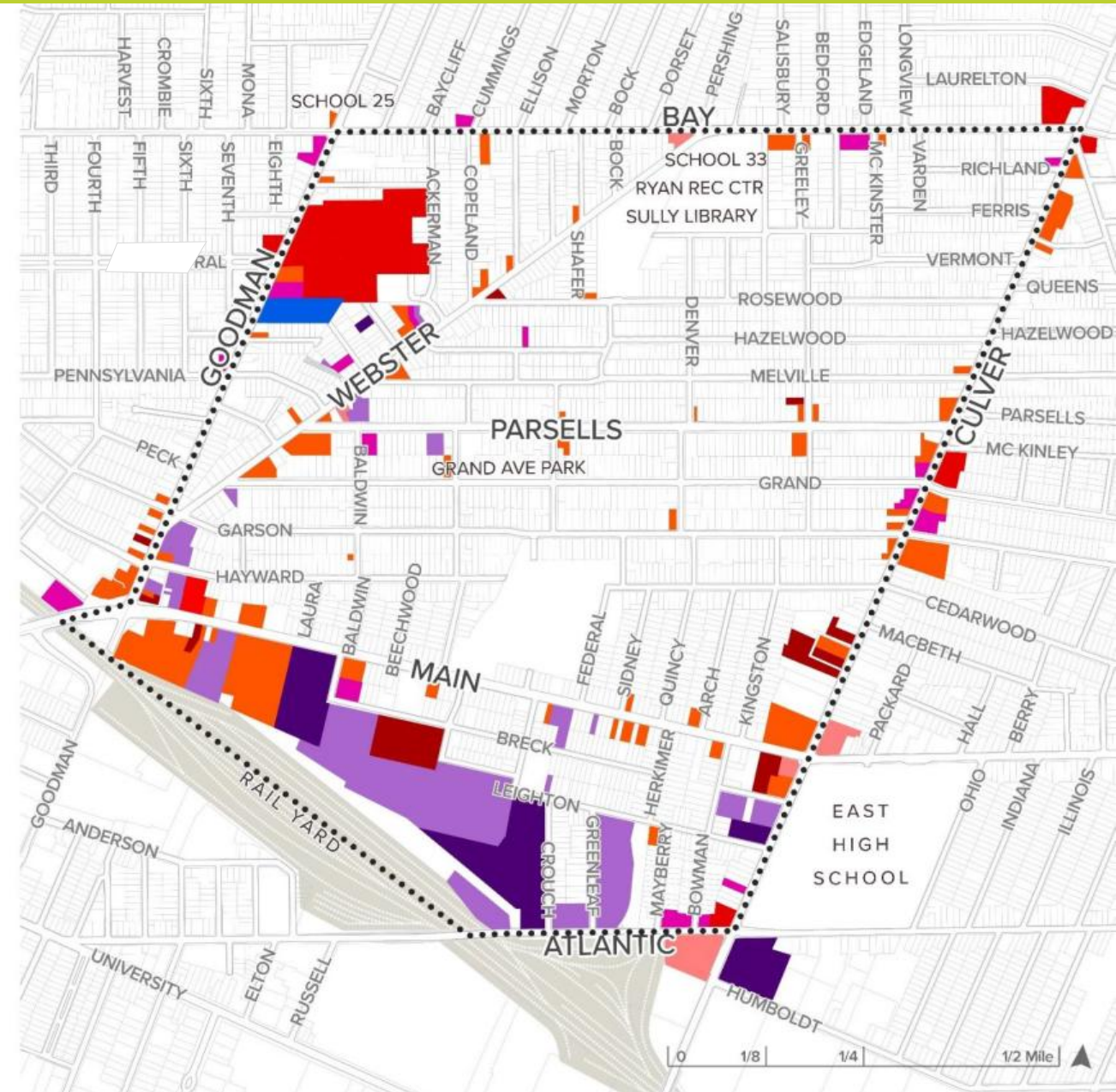
- Automobile Sales & Services
- Restaurants, Bars, and Fast Food
- Retail and Services
- Offices
- Mixed-Use
- Distribution Facility

Industrial

- Manufacturing

Residents who participated in public engagement for the plan said they want to see many new types of businesses. The top categories were:

- **Retail shops**
- **A grocery store**
- **Cafés**
- **Clothing stores**



Economic Opportunity

Goals for the Plan

Based on resident input, these goals have been formulated for the economic opportunity portion of this plan:

The commercial corridors in EMMA and Beechwood should support local entrepreneurs' efforts to start businesses and succeed.

The community should be home to more and better businesses that both serve local residents and draw in outsiders.

The community should have access to local resources to help residents improve their financial health, build wealth, and develop the skills and connections needed to succeed in the workforce.



New City Café at the PlayROCS Play Street in Beechwood Source: *The Little Flower Community*

Recommendations

1. **Partner with the City's Office of Community Wealth Building to bring personalized and professional counseling and access to safe and affordable banking services to the neighborhood.** Integrate these critical services in the proposed multi-purpose Neighborhood Hub (detailed in the Health & Wellness chapter).
2. **Provide direct assistance to select entrepreneurs or existing businesses to start or expand businesses that support and are located in the community.** Provide technical assistance and help securing financing.
3. **Connect local entrepreneurs with classes provided by Kiva Loans, the Office of Community Wealth Building, and others.** Build awareness of classes that meet local businesses' needs.
4. **Leverage Opportunity Zone status to direct and coordinate new commercial investment in favor of local businesses and community goals.** Work with the Rochester Economic Development Corporation (REDCO), which intends to invest along East Main Street, to align commercial development goals and strategies.
5. **Focus on East Main Street and North Goodman as the community's greatest opportunities to attract or establish new commercial businesses and services.**
6. **Build partnerships to support people and businesses.** Align economic development, job training, and business coaching efforts with the City's programs to boost community-based businesses.

"I think if people had the knowledge and support to help start their businesses, they would. Lots of people want to start a business, but don't know how to go about it."

NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENT

"Keep it in the neighborhood!
It really helps the younger generation."

"Local hiring makes neighborhood better and warmer."

NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS



East Main before reconstruction

Health & Wellness

What Have We Learned?

RESIDENTS HAVE TOLD US “HEALTH & WELLNESS” IS...

- **The practice of eating well and exercising**
- **Influenced by environmental factors** such as air quality, dust, or soil contaminants
- **Influenced by feelings of safety** and concerns about drugs or crime
- **A balance** between what you know you should do and what you can afford to / have time to do

RESIDENTS FACE MANY OBSTACLES TO GOOD HEALTH

- **Emergency Room visits are more common among Beechwood and EMMA residents** than they are among city and country residents, especially for respiratory infections and for pregnancy complications.
- **Premature death and chronic health issues like obesity** are significantly more common in EMMA and Beechwood than city- or county-wide. It is also more common for adults to lack health insurance here than in the city.
- **Elevated blood lead levels** were present in approximately 56 children in Beechwood and EMMA for the years 2014-2017.



What Have We Learned?

Residents in Beechwood and EMMA lack centralized access to high-quality health & wellness resources. From the start, it was recognized that some form of centralized service-provision and community health facilities might be beneficial for the residents.



In partnership with Causewave Community Partners and The Meadows Group, topic-specific engagement and planning around the concept of a “neighborhood hub” for health resources sought to determine if such an idea was right for Beechwood & EMMA residents – and how it might be implemented. Simultaneously, in the course of the overall neighborhood planning process, residents were engaged around issues related to their streets, parks, gardens, and other open spaces, to understand how those assets could contribute to community health.

TOPIC-SPECIFIC “NEIGHBORHOOD HUB” PLANNING & ENGAGEMENT APPROACH		
PHASE I Clarifying Objectives and Planning For Public Engagement around the Neighborhood Hub concept	PHASE II Public Engagement, Data Collection and Analysis	PHASE III Development of Recommendations and Plan for Implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sought to develop a mutual understanding of the expected goals/deliverables• Determined the roles of community partners and residents• Convened advisory team and determined how members would be compensated for their participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewed secondary data (i.e. Asset-based Needs Assessment, Housing Market Study, nationwide and local benchmarks for wellness centers and health resource hubs)• Hosted community engagement sessions• Developed working definition of the “ideal” health and wellness center: services, location, hours of operation, capacity• Determined construction estimates (industry standards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developed financial model and identified potential funding sources• Risk analysis: assessment of potential risks and identification of mitigation strategies• Developed speculative marketing plan• Developed start-up/launch timeline and tasks• Launch plan, including final program/ offering recommendations

What Have We Learned?

As part of the development of the Neighborhood Hub, it is important to learn from existing high-quality wellness centers and neighborhood hubs located around the country. While the Beechwood & EMMA Neighborhood Hub will be a reflection of the unique needs local residents, the community can benefit from the collective learnings of other models that have walked this path before.

This learning includes engaging The Meadows Group, who was one of the key leaders behind the development of The Accelerator in Omaha, NE, which has been one of the main benchmarks throughout this planning process.

NEIGHBORHOOD HUB PRECEDENTS		
<div>OMAHA, NE</div> <div>The Accelerator</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">A community building and spaces located in the heart of the Highlander neighborhood with the purpose of activating a once dormant communityBuilding tenants include two colleges, a café, and a community development organizationIncludes an event hall for meetings, parties, conferences and more; a dining hall with three local restaurants and a grab-and-go concept; an outdoor concert/event venue; and community classrooms for college classes and business trainings</div>	<div>WASHINGTON, DC</div> <div>THEARC (Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus)</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Three buildings, a farm, and a playground that sits on 16.5 acres east of the Anacostia River community in Washington, DCHouses 14 nonprofit organizationsIncludes a 365-seat community theater, black box theater, urban farm, gymnasium, libraries, computer labs, classrooms, studios for dance, music and visual arts studios, an art gallery, public playgrounds, and more.Dance classes, music, fine arts, academics, continuing education, mentoring, tutoring, recreation, medical and dental care, and other services at a substantially reduced cost or no cost at all.</div>	<div>INDIANAPOLIS, IN</div> <div>Avondale Meadows Health & Wellness Center</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Collaboration between the YMCA of Greater Indianapolis, IU Health and HealthNet; located in “The Meadows” neighborhood on the Eastside of Indianapolis5,600 square-foot, fully equipped YMCA has full gym, group exercise classes, and gymnasiumAlso offers a child watch center where kids can go while their parents exercise, a chapel, and a teen centerHealth center provides comprehensive primary care services, including pediatrics, adult medical care, and OB/GYN, with most insurance plans accepted</div>

What Have We Learned?

The public engagement portion of the neighborhood hub planning process sought to understand what aspects of a potential neighborhood hub residents found most appealing.

From October to December 2019, Connected Communities staff and resident ambassadors collected input from **151 residents at 9 sites** across EMMA/Beechwood, including schools, faith-based communities, events, and neighborhood meetings.

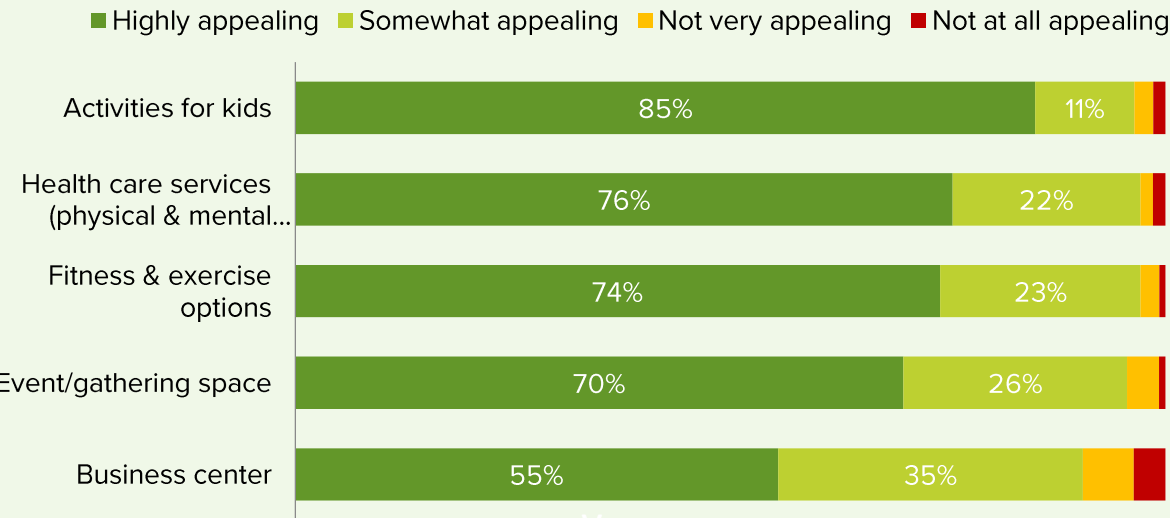
Residents were asked about five components that could potentially be included in a Neighborhood Hub:

- *Activities for Kids*
- *Healthcare Services (Physical & Mental)*
- *Fitness & Exercise*
- *Event/Gathering Space*
- *Business Center*

Activities for kids were rated highly appealing by the most respondents (85%), followed by Health Care Services (76%) and Fitness & Exercise (74%). Overall, at least 55 percent of respondents rated all five components highly appealing. Thus, they could all have a home in a future Hub; though a phased development / launch approach may be necessary given available resources.

While the business center received the least support, certain sub- components of the business center were overwhelmingly popular; for example, 70 percent of respondents would like resume writing and job application & interviewing support to be offered. Also, a number of people referenced job training for trade positions during conversations.

Residents' Preferences for Neighborhood Hub Offerings



Residents participate in discussions and engagement activities around the Neighborhood Hub concept

What Have We Learned?

Engagement around the neighborhood hub dug in on each of the five main components to ask what particular types of programs and services residents would like.

The top responses in each category were:

Activities for kids

- Indoor/outdoor play spaces (69%)
- Music lessons (63%)

Health care services

- Dental services (65%)
- Mental health and self-care support (63%)
- Nutrition education (62%)

Fitness & exercise

- Indoor fitness center (66%)
- Group classes (60%)
- Swimming pool (58%)

Event/gathering space

- Place to host family events (60%)
- Place to host community events (58%)
- Food court/café (57%)

Business center

- Resume writing, job applications & interviewing support (70%)
- Access to technology (65%)
- Free legal services (59%)



Residents at one of the neighborhood plan public meetings

Goals for the Plan

Based on resident input, these goals have been formulated for the economic opportunity portion of this plan:

Residents should have access to high-quality health services and community facilities at a central location in the neighborhood.

Services and programs should respond to resident needs and priorities. Residents should be considered partners in the process of achieving this goal at every stage.

The larger neighborhood should support safe, healthy, and enjoyable choices for adults and children. Streets, parks, gardens, and other public spaces should be design and programmed to encourage safety, health, and wellness.



Community story walk painted at Sully Library encourages healthy living and play Source: WHAM 13 ABC

Recommendations

1. **Build and operate a Neighborhood Hub housing healthcare services and community facilities for the residents of Beechwood and EMMA, located in the community, with components that respond to the vision and priorities articulated by neighborhood residents and stakeholders.**

Continue robust community engagement throughout the life of the project to further inform the design and programming of the Hub and to ensure it continues to respond to community needs and priorities. The most immediate goal in upcoming engagement should be the further clarification and prioritization of potential Neighborhood Hub components.

Move forward with planning considering the highest rated components that have come out of community engagement to date, namely: activities for kids, healthcare services, and fitness & exercise. Plan with future phases / expansions in mind, considering how the other Neighborhood Hub components (event/gathering space and a business center) might be integrated.

Execute a marketing plan targeting community members (primarily those living in EMMA and Beechwood), current and potential partners, and current and potential funders / investors, to communicate the importance of the Hub, and how they can best support it.

Flier for
community
visioning
sessions
about the
Neighborhood
Hub idea from
October 2019



Recommendations

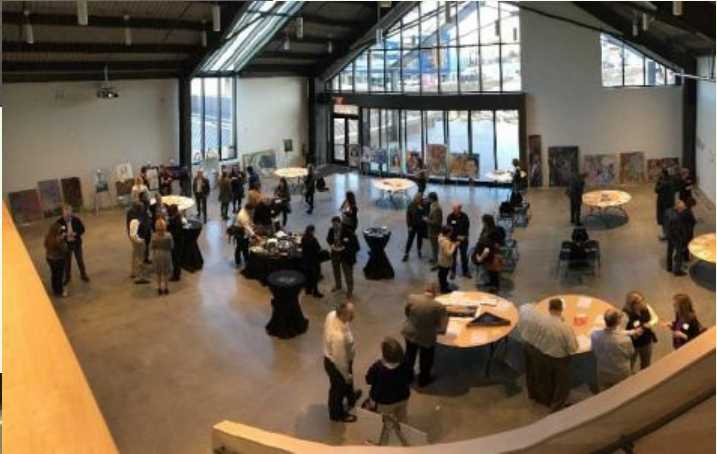
1. Build and operate a Neighborhood Hub ... (continued).

Execute a marketing plan targeting community members (primarily those living in EMMA and Beechwood), current and potential partners, and current and potential funders / investors, to communicate the importance of the Hub, and how they can best support it.

NEIGHBORHOOD HUB MARKETING PLAN OVERVIEW		
DESIRED OUTCOMES / GOAL		
As a result of marketing efforts, target audiences understand their role in supporting the Neighborhood Hub.		
Community Members	Partners	Funders
primarily EMMA & Beechwood residents	current and potential	current and potential
KEY MESSAGES AND CALLS TO ACTION		
What is the Neighborhood Hub? How has this idea been informed by community members?	What is the Neighborhood Hub?/ Why is it important?	What is the Neighborhood Hub?/ Why is it important?
Status/timeline	Status/timeline	Status/timeline
How to engage / provide input along the way	Opportunities to partner / get involved	Opportunities to invest



Showing stakeholders successful examples of similar facilities in other cities can help draw them in and demonstrate what is possible.



Top: Avondate Meadows Health & Wellness Center

Middle and Bottom: The Accelerator, Omaha, NE

Recommendations

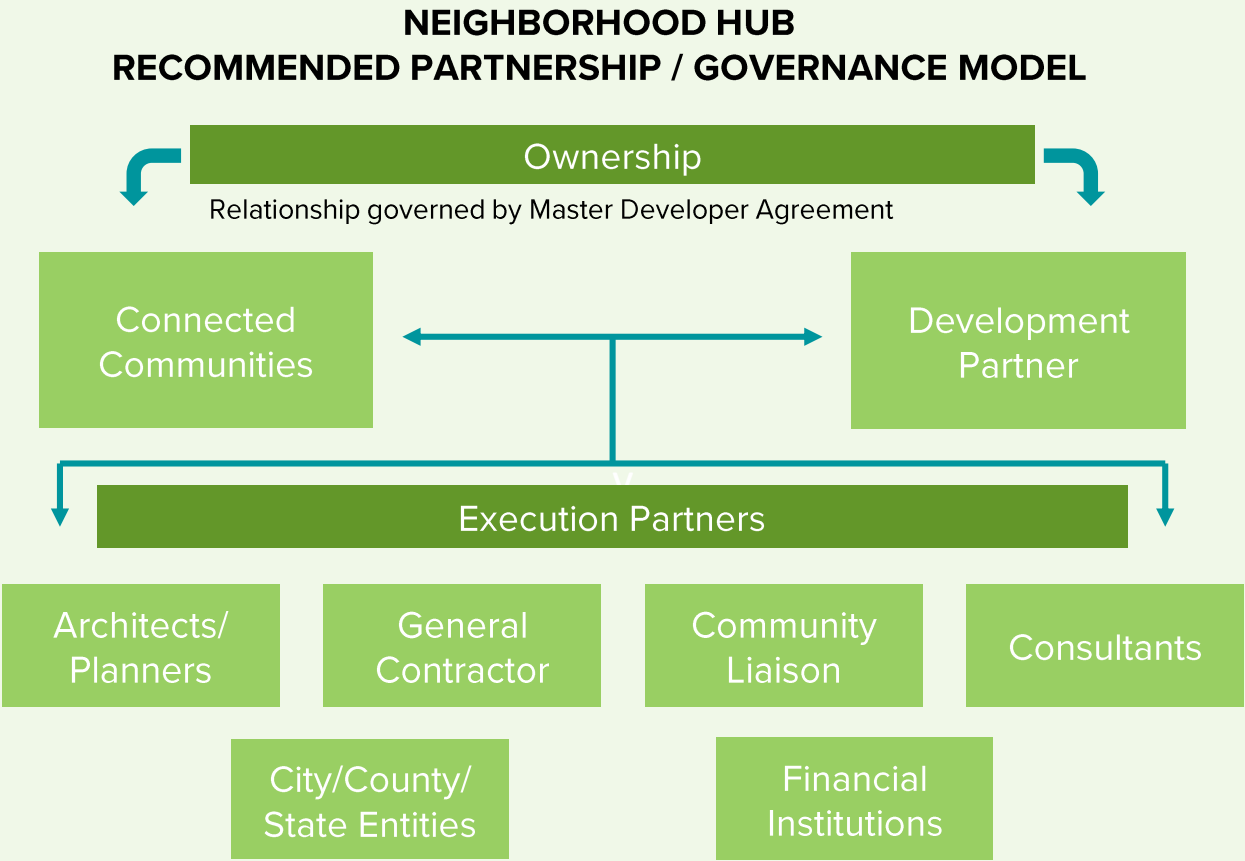
1. Build and operate a Neighborhood Hub ... (continued).

Assemble a development team composed of Connected Communities, a developer, architects, planners, and others, who will participate in community engagement and outreach to inform the design of the Neighborhood Hub.

Recruit and select program partners to execute the vision communicated by neighborhood residents and stakeholders.

Under the recommended governance model outlined to the right, Connected Communities will own and operate the Hub, and...

- CC will enter into a fee development agreement with an experienced entity.
- CC will coordinate the development of partnerships that activate the Neighborhood Hub in ways that are responsive to what was learned in the engagement process.
- CC will manage leases, recruit program partners, and ensure community input and equity.



Recommendations

1. Build and operate a Neighborhood Hub ... (continued).

Create a sustainable funding strategy that identifies available capital and operating funds from a mix of public funding sources, philanthropy, tax credit equity, and – to a lesser extent – debt. Strong tenants and partners secured during this stage can provide financial stability through the process.

Select and acquire a site within the community.

Financing a multi-tenant, community oriented, Neighborhood Hub building is often a complex and difficult transaction requiring multiple funding sources.

The most common arrangement is a combination of philanthropy, public funding, tax credit equity and bank debt. The other major lever in these transactions is the ability to attract credit tenants/partners that can provide both the value programmatically that the community seeks and the financial stability for the entity that owns and manages the facility.

The charts to the right are an example of how the Hub may be structured.

NEIGHBORHOOD HUB
SAMPLE FUNDING SOURCES AND USES

SAMPLE FUNDING SOURCES	
New Markets Tax Credit Equity	\$4,900,000
City Infrastructure Funding	\$500,000
Philanthropic Investment	\$14,600,000
TOTAL SOURCES	\$20,000,000

SAMPLE FUNDING USES	
Sitework/Infrastructure	\$1,600,000
Construction	\$15,060,000
Soft Costs/Fees	\$1,800,000
Interim Costs	\$60,000
Developer Fee	\$1,480,000
TOTAL USES	\$20,000,000

Recommendations

1. Build and operate a Neighborhood Hub ... (continued).

POTENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD HUB LAUNCH TIMELINE

TASK	SCHED.	DETAILS
Community Engagement and Data Analysis	Ongoing	Connected Communities has done significant work in community engagement and data collection. However, these tasks are ongoing and will continue through the life of the project.
Assemble Development Team	April 30, 2020	Entire team (lead organization, developer, architects, planners, and GC) should be involved in engagement and outreach activities. These interactions then guide the planning and development activities.
Recruit and Select Program Partners	Ongoing	Connected Communities will recruit program partners to execute on the vision communicated to them by neighborhood stakeholders and residents.
Create Funding and Sustainability Strategy	June 1, 2020	Connected Communities and its' partners will create a strategy to identify available sources for both capital and operational funds for the Neighborhood Hub.
Site Selection/ Acquisition	August 31, 2020	Connected Communities has tentatively identified a site and will begin purchase negotiations in Q3 2020.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD HUB

Public Funding Sources

Depending on the priorities of a state or municipality and the availability of resources, public funding mechanisms such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) can fill funding gaps in a variety of ways. Often these resources can be used for acquisition, demolition of existing structures, or public improvements and infrastructure. These resources do, however, come with significant compliance and regulatory constraints.

Tax Credit Equity

New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC's) are a powerful tool in the creation of new, non-residential development in distressed census tracts. Although the transactions are complex and often expensive on the front end of a deal, the resulting equity boost typically makes these credits worth pursuing. For example, NMTC's typically generate somewhere between 25-33% of the total development costs of the project. That is equity that would typically come into these deals as additional philanthropy. As a result, a 25 million dollar building that generates 7.5 million in NMTC's saves the philanthropic community that same amount which can then be deployed into other community initiatives. The credit also reduces the fundraising pressure on the community-based organization.

Philanthropy

Philanthropy will always play a dominant role in buildings that are community rather than commercially focused. Even when there is commercial activity associated with these centers they are often, at best, break even endeavors. As they usually have weak revenue streams, philanthropy is always necessary for much of the capital costs, and operating expenses will often necessitate an annual fundraising push to close any gaps.

Debt

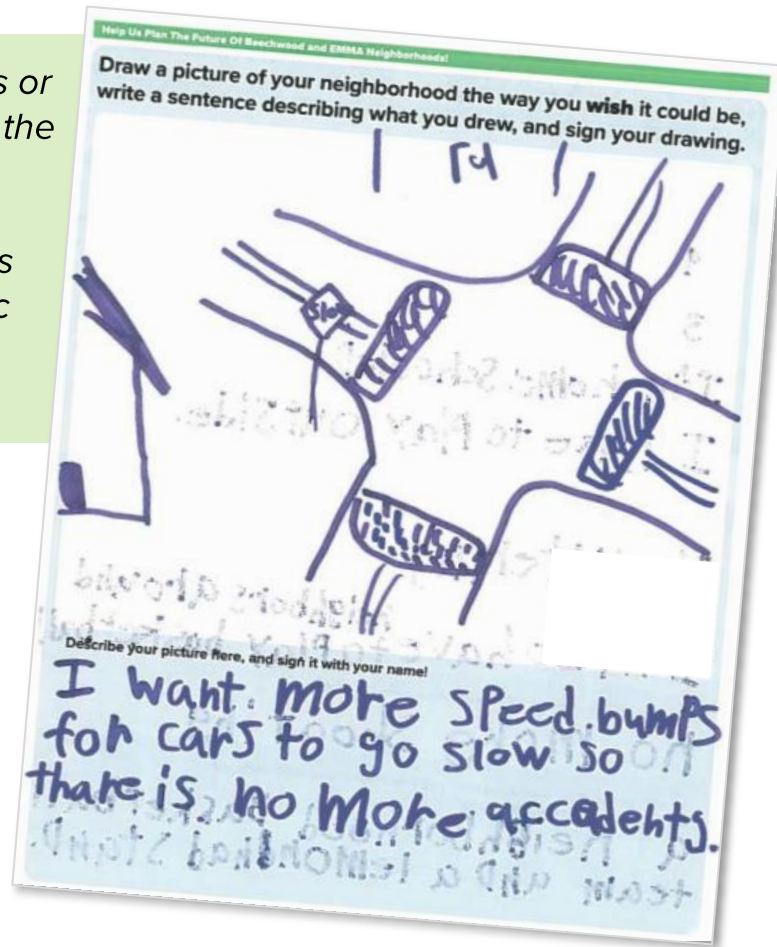
As mentioned previously, these projects are rarely able to support any significant debt. Depending on the complexity of the building, the cost to operate the facility can make breaking even a difficult proposition for the owner. However, should the project attract strong, institutional anchor tenants, the rents generated may be able to cover expenses and service a small to moderate amount of debt. If possible, Connected Communities will avoid debt, which will increase the possibility of the facility being revenue positive for the organization.

Recommendations

2. Support traffic calming efforts, such as painted intersections and speed bumps, to expand on the improvements made through the Complete Streets Makeover at Parsells and Greeley.

*Painted crosswalks or intersections were the **most popular idea** among twelve “early action” ideas presented to public engagement participants.*

Multiple youth also mentioned slowing down cars in their neighborhood.



The Complete Streets Makeover of Parsells and Greeley completed in the Beechwood neighborhood, in progress (right) and finished (above).



Recommendations

3. **Support the expansion and protection of community gardens that provide food for residents and/or provide space and assistance for residents who wish to grow their own food.**

Evaluate the current geographic distribution of gardens, whether current gardens are at capacity, and the supply of parcels that are too small or otherwise undesirable for residential development.

Help expand current gardens or seed new gardens to grow the number of people gardening in the neighborhood, with even geographic distribution.

Explore pathways to secure ownership of community gardens on vacant land, possibly through the City Roots Land Trust.

Community gardens are popular in Beechwood & EMMA:

During Connected Communities' survey of vacant parcels, they spoke with nearby residents about what they wanted to see on the lots:

Communities gardens came up in conversations about 23 separate vacant parcels, not counting the neighborhood's known active gardens, of which there are at least eight.



The 441 Ministries community garden at 441 Ministries on Parsells

Recommendations

4. Invest in new and improved public spaces to that provide more recreational options to kids and inviting gathering-places for adults.

Make improvements to Grand Avenue Park to make it feel more inviting, safe, and like a center of community life. Possibly include perimeter landscaping or railroad tie fencing, improved sidewalks, interior gathering space with benches, and a bulletin board for community posting.



Cracked sidewalks, undefined edge, and the undistinguished lawn of Grand Ave Park.

Build a playground at 135-141 Hazelwood Terrace, to be maintained by City Roots Community Land Trust. Community members and organizations have expressed support for this idea, and drawings have been made of the final design.



The empty lots at 135-141 Hazelwood Terrace (bottom), and a rendering of the playground design by Jeffrey Associates (above). The Beechwood Neighborhood Coalition and the City Roots Community Land Trust have both signed letters in support of the playground.

Recommendations

- 5. **Assess the environmental condition of the former McLaurie Quarry at Goodman Plaza and explore temporary or permanent community-oriented uses for the large open space.**

Launch an environmental study into the space to understand its state and its potential negative impacts on health and the environment.

If the space can safely support it, explore community-oriented activations such as a winter ice skating rink – which many residents remember fondly from the past – or a more permanent sports dome.



The usable area at Goodman Plaza could comprise between **2 to 4 acres.**

The large underutilized open area at the former quarry.



Above: For many years, the recreation center on Webster Avenue in Beechwood Avenue in Beechwood featured a winter ice skating rink.

Source: Beechwood resident

“For years we had an ice skating rink as part of the recreation center on Webster Ave. ... I have a vision to bring it back to Beechwood. There is a lot of open land unused in the winter, at Goodman Plaza and at the Ryan Center.

*“Irondequoit has a rink in front of the town hall and there is one in Fairport. [They are] good examples of **family fun outdoors in the winter.**”* BEECHWOOD RESIDENT



Above: Greece, NY, brings a quarter-acre “natural-made” ice rink to its town center every year. Source: GreeceNY.gov



Left: The downtown Rochester Holiday Village features free skating at a public ice rink. Source: WHAM 13 ABC

Early Actions

What Have We Learned?

Beechwood and EMMA residents and partner organizations have dedicated a lot of time to citywide planning and neighborhood-scale studies in recent years. Residents are proud of community-driven projects that have brought people together and brought positive change to the neighborhood, and they are inspired to keep working, effecting visible, tangible change while the planning process is still underway.

Prioritizing a few actions for immediate implementation – even while a planning process is still in progress – affirms that change is possible, momentum is real, and working together is worth it.

Residents are hungry for action and have many ideas about what types of community-driven projects would meet community needs. Even better, some of these ideas can be quick wins – relatively low-cost, quick ways to demonstrate what the community can accomplish together: learning, getting healthier, improving the neighborhood, and having fun.



The Complete Streets Makeover of the intersection at Parsells and Greeley. Painted crosswalks and intersections were the most popular early action idea among participants in public engagement activities.

Early Actions

What Have We Learned

Ideas for beautifying the neighborhood rank highly among residents’ preferences for early actions. Community members are enthusiastic about more painted intersections – an idea executed successfully in the neighborhood already. Many voted for holiday lights and more gardens.

Residents also like idea for fun events that bring people together, like barbeques or youth and family activities. Most ideas for educational programming did not rank highly. However many voted for a tool library – an idea that has proven popular elsewhere in Rochester; the South Wedge-Corn Hill tool library currently features over 300 tools.

What else did neighbors suggest?

Fun and Exercise

- Bring ice skating back to Webster Park
- Monthly bike rides around nearby neighborhoods
- Community fitness classes
- Pool or splash pad at Grand Ave Playground
- Neighbor-organized block parties

Family & Youth Initiatives

- Litter clean up
- Family book club
- Walking school bus
- Positive role models for kids
- Partner with Sew Green for a satellite location
- Youth jobs and training
- Gardening classes
- Nutrition classes
- Parenting classes

Activities Promoting Togetherness

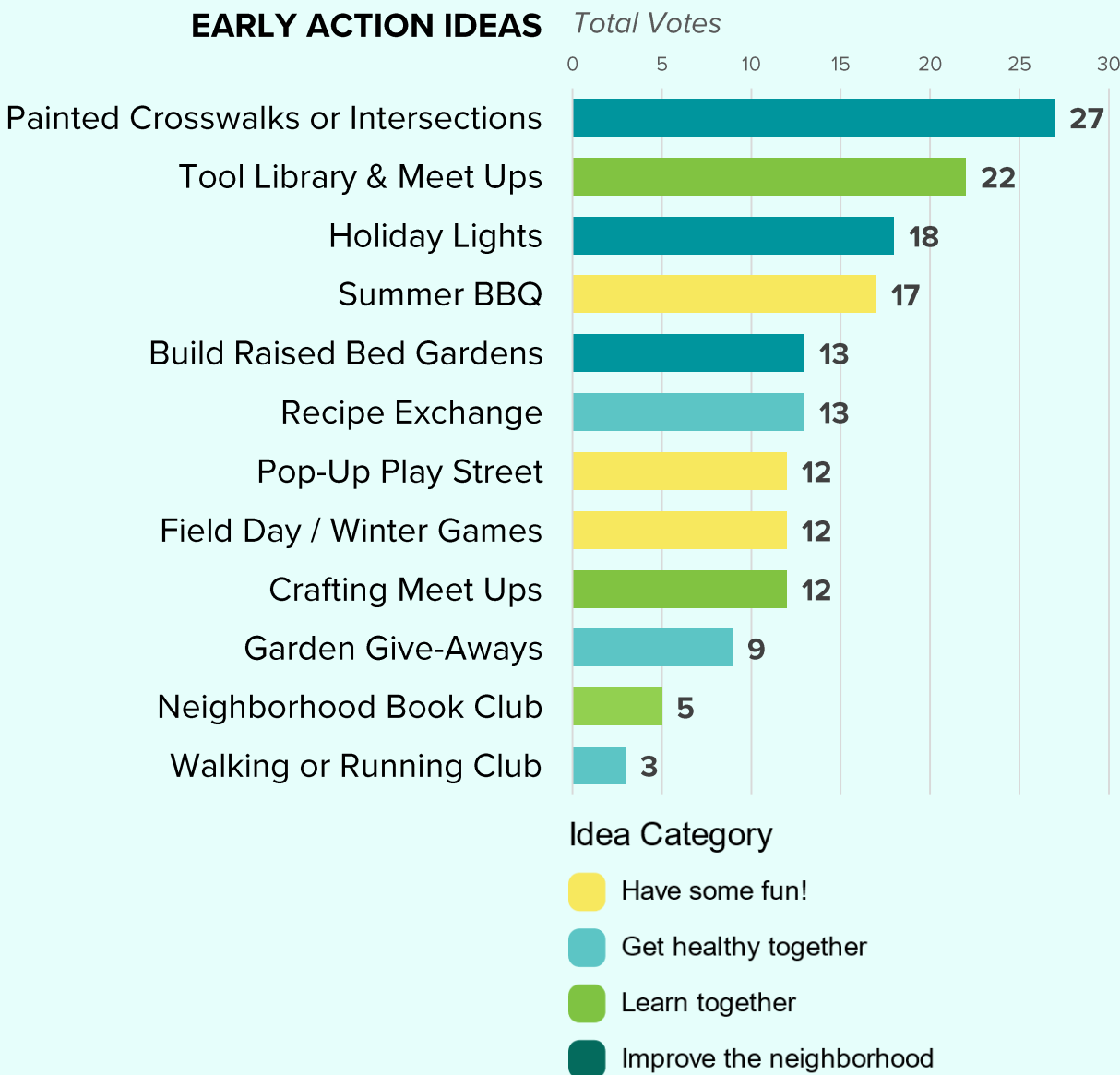
- Come to New City Cafe for a coffee and meet our residents
- Senior caregiver support group
- Potlucks
- Healthy eating luncheon

Better Food and Shopping

- Better stores for fresh food
- Grocery buying club
- Thrift store
- Close stores at midnight, not 2 a.m.

Adult Activities

- Financial literacy classes
- GED classes
- Skill-share / peer learning and teaching
- Bible study



Next Steps

Community Feedback and Prioritization

This *Comprehensive Plan for the EMMA and Beechwood Neighborhoods* is a living document. In February, residents and stakeholders will have the opportunity to give feedback on this version of the plan in a second set of public meetings dedicated to the planning process. One goal of these meetings will be to prioritize early action ideas and assess the capacity of local partners to implement them. Moving forward from those meetings, partners will aim to get moving on the ideas that garner the most resident support.

Comments on the plan and discussions with key partners in February will inform final edits to the document and a plan for implementation.



Participants at public meeting.

For more information or to get involved, contact:
Connected Communities
(585) 224-1081

