

Dear Dorraine,

The Beechwood Neighborhood Coalition Board would like to thank you for the incredible job you and your team did pulling together this draft of the Rochester 2034 comprehensive plan. We want to applaud the investment of time and energy you made in reaching out to so many groups for input as well as the care taken to synthesize that input into a document. We strongly believe that your process will lead to a durable and robust tool with substantial community buy-in. Individually, through a sub-committee, and as the full governing body of our neighborhood coalition, we have spent considerable time and energy studying the 500 page draft plan, discussing the merits and our concerns, and weighing our input. We are grateful for the opportunity to share it with you.

There are a number of included proposals and details that we are especially pleased to see and hope will remain in the final report, specifically:

- ✓ the designation of character areas in general and in the Beechwood Neighborhood in particular, whose boundaries consist of Culver Road, Bay St, Webster Ave, N. Goodman St, and East Main Street (map, page 80). We believe this strikes a good balance between Low Density Residential (which we have known as R1) in the majority of the neighborhood while encouraging business growth and density on our main corridors (as outlined above as our boundaries). We suggest that Bay St. be considered for a similar designation. Additionally, we are supportive of the proposed Medium Density and Boutique zones along Parsells Ave. For example, we're excited about the possibility of businesses like New City Cafe being able to expand their seating as well as lowering the barrier for businesses other than simply corner stores to occupy some of the existing store fronts along this corridor. We're also aware that the potential increase in density will help to support the bus line that is essential to so many of our neighbors.
- ✓ with regard to the suggested use of parking assessment as an alternative to parking minimums in Mixed-Use character zones: We believe that the Plan makes a strong case for adjusting the minimums in these regions in favor of using a parking assessment tool, which factors in anticipated use, potential impact, on-street parking, nearby shared lots, bike facilities, etc, (page 103).
- ✓ support for community and neighborhood schools (page 216, 223). Thank you for mentioning the **pathway** (We prefer this wording over "feeder program.") from School 33 and East High School, which we strongly support. We would like to see School 33 be the default, unless parents or guardians request another school. (We acknowledge that our neighbors in EMMA consider School 28 to be their neighborhood school, which they would also like to be a pathway to East High.) Likewise, we appreciate the note in the comprehensive plan draft (page 216) and strongly support City advocacy for RCSD to provide busing for students even within 1.5 miles of a school. Noting that less than 20% of our neighborhood children currently attend School 33, it is our considered opinion that providing busing for neighborhood children would enable a substantial increase in neighborhood attendance.
- ✓ the prioritization of being a pedestrian friendly, walkable and bikeable City. We are thrilled to see Beechwood's Complete Streets Makeover as a reference to good placemaking.
- ✓ avoidance of the value-laden word "gentrification." Our preferred wording, and the one that we see most often in like-minded industry literature, is "development without displacement, including that of current residents."

- ✓ we agree that currently existing multi-family structures should be able to be rebuilt as such in the case of fire or demolition. As for houses that were converted from single to multi-family and then sat vacant for 9+ months, there may be instances where it makes sense to allow for a house to remain as multi-family upon rehabilitation whereas the house may be better suited for a single-family in others. This should be determined case-by-case or based upon other specific criteria such as the total square footage of liveable space.
- ✓ recommended trails and spur trails: specifically those marked on the map (page 80) as RS&E Trolley Trail, and East Side Commuter Rail-with-Trail. We applaud and strongly support the vision to include these greenways and want to express our excitement and hope that these will receive adequate attention and resources to come to fruition.

Likewise, as the board for the Beechwood Neighborhood, there are a number of things that we are especially concerned about, and would like to see included, changed, or receive additional emphasis in the final version of Rochester 2034, specifically:

- displacement of our current residents. We see a vital need for **quality**, permanently affordable housing for folks who want to remain in their neighborhoods, including ours. We believe that the vision put forth by City Roots Community Land Trust is one of the best ways we have to address this increasing concern. As such, we would like to see City Roots included as a partner for developing strategies for creating permanent affordable housing and as a key partner in the plan to reduce vacant and zombie properties. We see numerous additional opportunities to include the Community Land Trust (pages 121, 131, 151, 159). We are convinced that City Roots needs to be included as a strategic partner with Rochester Land Bank (pages 151, 156, 158, and Finding Your Way sections beginning on page 6). We would like to see inclusion of the City partnering with City Roots Community Land Trust for strategic rehab and repair (page 136).
- a section which references redlining and previous policies of urban renewal. In numerous areas this comprehensive plan notes historical material, informing the reader of the context in which we currently find our City. Acknowledging our past, regardless of how painful, is a critical and important part of moving forward, and we believe none is more important than this. There is a growing awareness of redlining and the detriments of previous policies, but much of the community does not yet understand that the concentrations of wealth and poverty which so strongly shapes our current context did not happen naturally or by accident. Addressing this, simply by acknowledging it, has the potential to be one of the most powerful effects of this plan, if it is included. Members of our neighborhood have developed specific expertise in this arena and would be glad to contribute to a draft or review of such content.
- regarding Medium Density Residential Character Areas across the City. We note that there seems to be some correlation between these areas and the areas within our city that are most economically impoverished. We caution that considerable care must be taken so that these designations do not become a repeat of redlining practices of the past.
- transportation providing connections to and interconnections within Beechwood, and indeed throughout the City. We would like to plan and implement protected bike lanes on East Main Street that run from Culver to at least Union. In general, we hope for and expect a more

vigorous implementation of the City **Complete Streets Policy**. Walkability and multimodal transportation needs to be emphasized. We are convinced that there can and must be more enterprising ways of working with snow plows, fire trucks, etc. so that Complete Streets and walkability are not sacrificed. We believe light rail may be an important and desirable transportation mode in Rochester in the long term, and that it would be wise for planning and development to proceed within the context of that possibility (reference page 366). Acknowledging that pedestrians have not always been a priority in the past recent decades is an important historical context.

- regarding housing strategies. We are concerned that there is much emphasis on strategies for “middle markets”, but little in the way of specifics for “weaker markets”. As the latter encompasses a significant portion of the City, including much of Beechwood, we believe there is a need for the goals for these markets to be further fleshed-out in the Plan. We call attention to the fact that many who live in “weaker markets” frequently must move from one place to another. This transience limits their own economic progress and stability, contributing to the weak market and all of the concerns that accompany poverty. We want to break the pattern of addressing poverty by just moving residents from one area to another. Simply providing services to those in “weaker markets,” which has been done for decades, will not be enough to improve the quality of life in Rochester.
- first-time homebuyers. Well aware that there are those in our neighborhood and beyond who yearn for the opportunity to purchase their first home, we would like to see additional incentives for first-time homebuyers to purchase single family homes, particularly those who have limited means.
- regarding the term “Boutique Mixed-Use.” We are concerned that the label of “boutique” may be perceived as exclusive. We encourage changing this to “Small Mixed-Use” which would be clearer and less context-laden.
- the benefit of having street-facing buildings and parking behind buildings whenever possible. This makes for more aesthetically pleasing streets and neighborhoods, and greatly enhances the walkability and perception of safety. Pages 35 and 55 in the Placemaking Plan are spots which give reference to this concept, but additional emphasis is requested.
- the value of landscaping within and around current parking areas when they are repaved or designed and the requirement of such when any new surface parking is built. We appreciate the recommendation that new surface parking be discouraged (page 70), but given the warming of our climate there is considerable need for landscaping -- trees and green areas -- to mitigate the heat-exaggerating effects of pavement. Additionally, new surface parking should be discouraged whenever possible in favor of shared parking areas and infrastructure that includes alternative modes of transportation.
- youth input. While we appreciate that there were specific outreach efforts to a charter school class, the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council, and RCSD leadership, we note that this was a very limited sample and likely did not include youth who are disenfranchised, or homeless, or living in the most poverty. We urge additional effort to seek participation from these populations going forward and we stand ready to offer support to make these connections.

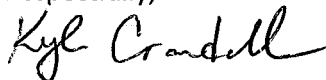
- community participation, from youth through seniors, by the inclusion of a certain number or percentage of seats, in the oversight committee (page 435). We agree that the establishment of an oversight committee is a necessity. Such a group will be an important resource for city residents and would have the potential to significantly impact the public perception that Rochester 2034 is not a book to put on a shelf, but a true roadmap forward to our 200th birthday. For this to be accomplished we advise and underline the importance that the membership of the committee must include diverse neighborhood voices from each quadrant within the city and downtown, as well as multi-sector partners that can significantly assist in the implementation of the final strategies.
- the need for metrics to be developed to track the implementation of Rochester 2034. The only way for the community at-large to continue to believe in and support this comprehensive plan will be for regularly-scheduled reports on pre-designed metrics to be delivered and shared online that measure progress toward implementation. The sooner that these metrics and reports are established, the better they will demonstrate full stewardship of the plan, rather than leading to an impression that reports are built to show only positive changes. References to specific report strategies should be included wherever relevant in monthly City legislative items.

And, we have a question.

Would it not be more accurate to mark as an institutional campus, with light gray on the map (page 80), the anticipated new Neighborhood Service Center and Police Station coming to Main and Laura Streets?

Again, thank you for your time, consideration, and hard work.

Respectfully,



Kyle Crandall, President, on behalf of the Beechwood Neighborhood Coalition