

Rochester's Center City

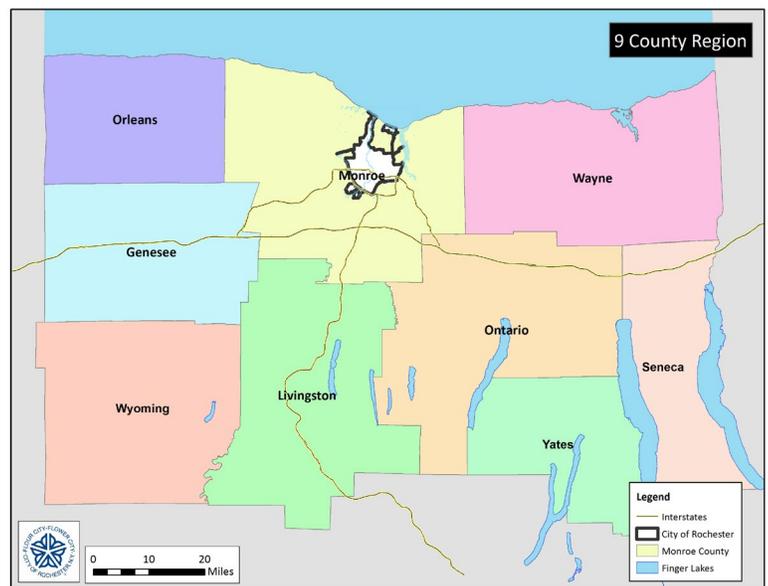
The sustainable urban core of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region



Rochester's Center City is the dynamic cultural, economic, governmental, and institutional center of the city and the region. It is the hub and urban core for the 1.2 million people living in the nine-county Genesee-Finger Lakes Region.

A successful city and successful region depends on a vibrant center. Center City's success depends on the initiative and effort not only of the citizens of Rochester and their city government, but also public, private and non-profit leadership at the regional and State level. The success of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region, in turn, depends on a strong and vibrant urban core.

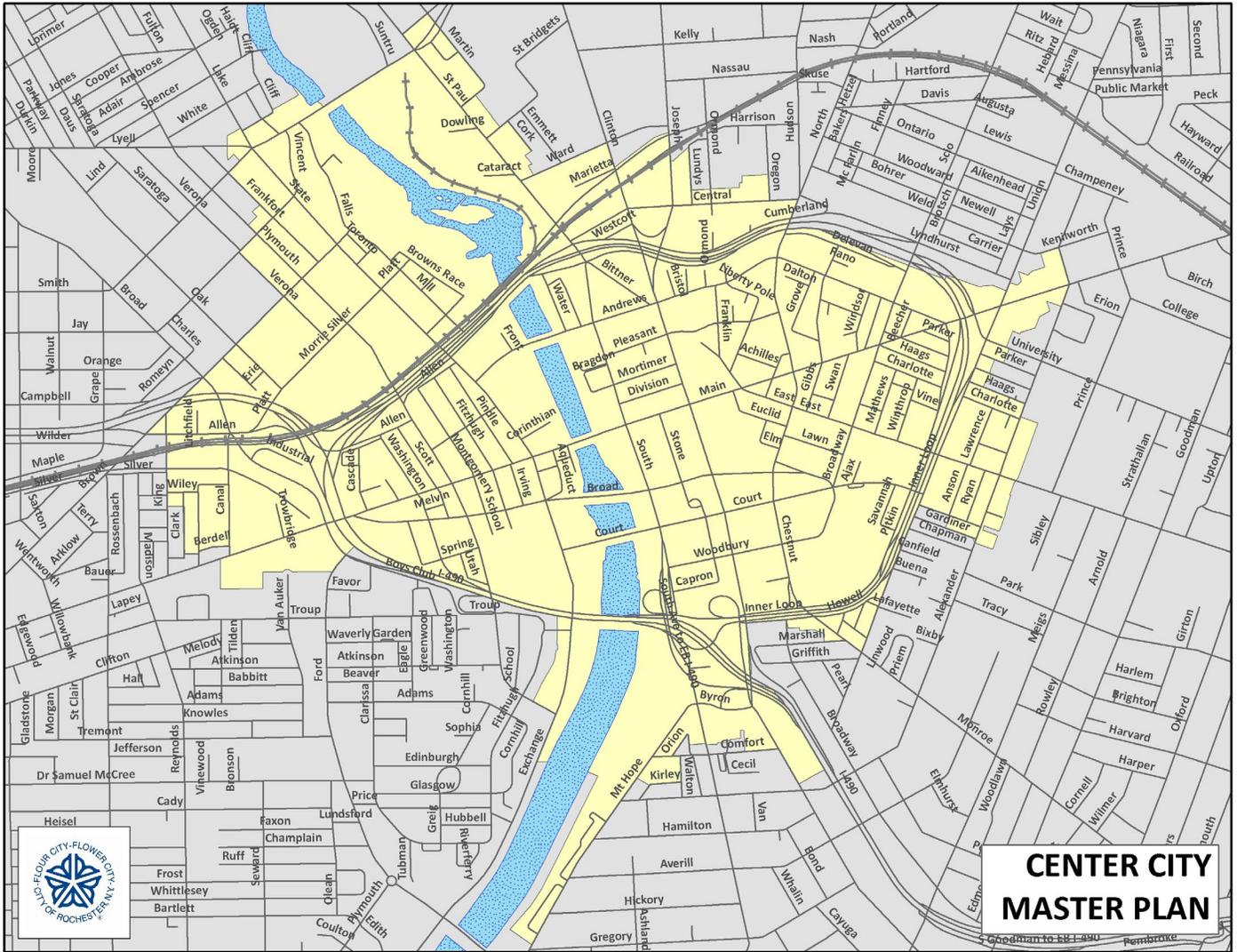
Center city's success is a key part of a sustainable city and sustainable region. The April 2013 draft of the *Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Plan* included a goal to "increase the sustainability and livability of the Finger Lakes Region by revitalizing the region's traditional centers, concentrating development in areas with existing infrastructure and services, and protecting agriculture and open space." With a built environment of dense urban neighborhoods, a compact and walkable street pattern, easy access by transit, Center City is inherently sustainable. Investment in the region's sustainable urban core instead of the region's farmland or forests, is, in the long term, both environmentally and economically sustainable.



What is Center City?

Center City, or downtown, has many meanings to different people and organizations. For the purposes of this plan, Center City is defined geographically by the Center City District in the Zoning Code.

This definition includes the areas that many people have traditionally considered ‘downtown,’ but also extends across the Inner Loop expressway to include High Falls, the Upper East End, and the Corn Hill and South Wedge waterfronts.



A note about terminology:

The terms ‘center city’ and ‘downtown’ are used interchangeably in most cases. For most of its history, the Rochester community, like most American cities, referred to its core as “downtown.” In the 1990s, the term ‘center city’ began to come into use locally. Either term is correct and, for the purposes of this document, will be used interchangeably.

About this Document

This document, the 2014 *Center City Master Plan* was prepared by the City of Rochester Bureau of Planning and Zoning and the Bureau of Engineering Services. It is an update of the 2003 *Center City Master Plan* prepared by the City of Rochester Bureau of Planning and Zoning. The intent is for this document to be a strategic plan that updates and replaces the 2003 plan. The 2014 plan will help the city measure and celebrate downtown progress, prioritize further research and analysis, prioritize projects, and help secure funding.

The plan is organized around 12 guiding principles for center city and 84 actions that will advance those principles. Many actions will advance more than one principle. The actions are organized by categories based on whether the action is generally a public sector responsibility, a private sector responsibility or a broad-based initiative requiring multiple areas of support.

Past Plans

Prior downtown plans include (but are not limited to):

- The 1990 plan entitled *Vision 2000: A Plan for Downtown* prepared by Lane, Frenchman, and Associates, Inc. in 1990
- The 1977 downtown plan
- The 1930 *Civic Center Plan for Rochester, NY* prepared by Harland Bartholomew and Associates
- The 1911 *City Plan for Rochester* prepared by Arnold Brunner and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
- The three original plats that coalesced to form the early Village of Rochester:
 - Rochester, Carroll and Fitzhugh's 100 Acre Tract on the west side of the river at the Main Street Bridge
 - Johnson and Seymour's 80 Acre Tract on the east side of the river at the Main Street Bridge
 - The Brown Brother's 200 Acre Tract on the west side of the river at High Falls

In addition to the prior downtown plans listed above, there has been a great deal of good planning done recently for specific projects in downtown Rochester. These include plans prepared by the City of Rochester or its consultant:

- Inner Loop Transformation Project
- Two Way Conversion Study
- Center City Circulator Study
- Intermodal Transportation Center
- Pedestrian Circulation and Wayfinding Study
- Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) Update Project
- Waterfront Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Grant
- Erie Harbor Park
- Martin Luther King Park (formerly Manhattan Square Park) Renovation
- Broad Street Bridge/Erie Canal Aqueduct
- Susan B Anthony Circulation, Access, and Parking Study
- Brown Square Neighborhood Circulation, Access, and Parking Study

There have also been community planning efforts:

- Rochester, NY A Vision for the Future
- Corn Hill Charette
- Rochester Garden Aerial
- Roc City Skatepark

Future Plans

The 2014 Center City Master Plan includes in its actions several further studies, plans, and policy documents. These include:

- Downtown Retail Strategy
- Revisions to the Center City Zoning Code
- Revisions to the Subdivision Code
- Main Street Public Realm Plan
- University-Andrews Public Realm Plan
- St. Joseph's Square Public Realm Plan
- Detailed Regulating Plans for the 40 Key Intersections and Gateways

As they are completed and adopted, these collected documents together with the 2014 Center City Master Plan will form a substantial body of planning for downtown Rochester.

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