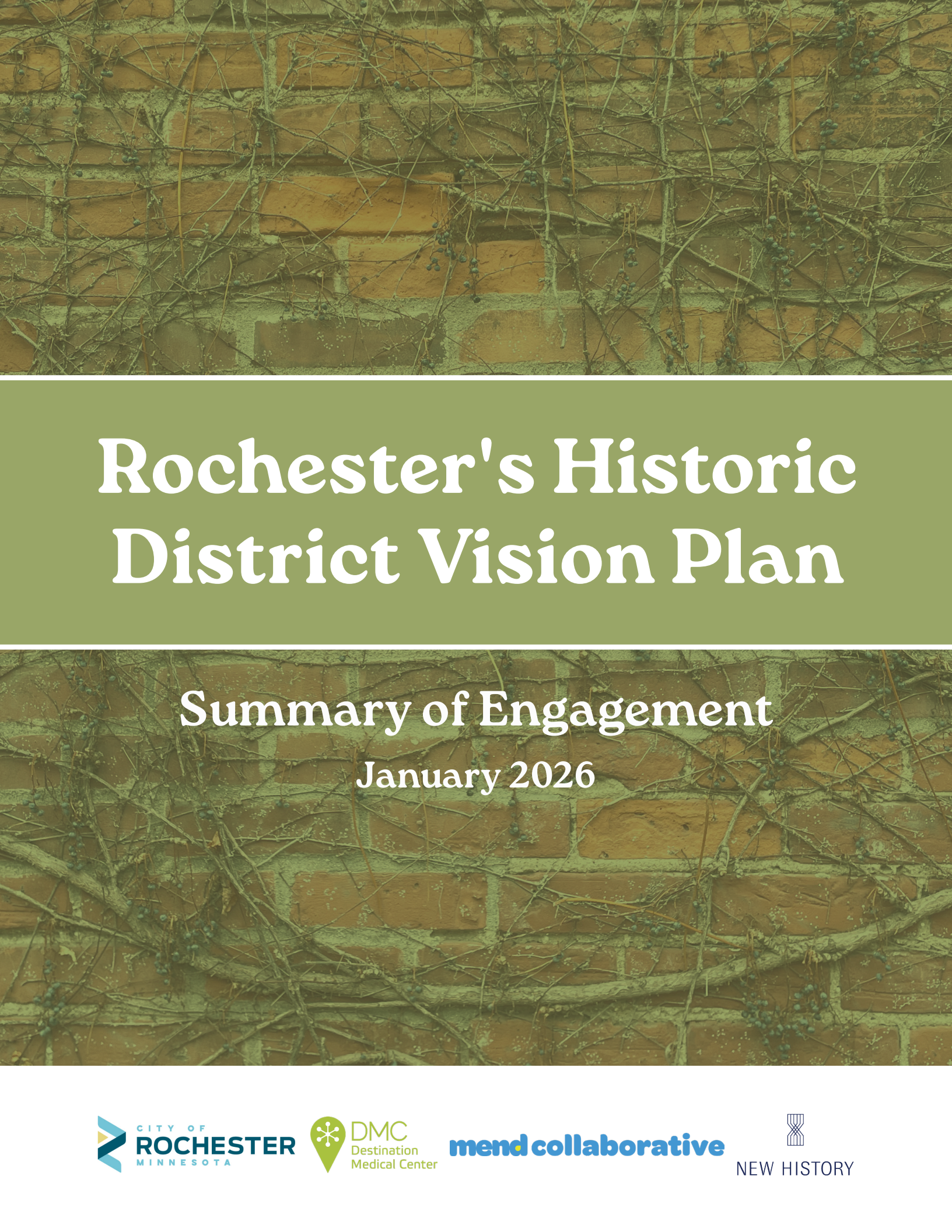




# Rochester's Historic District Vision Plan

Summary of Engagement  
January 2026



## Summarizing What We Heard

### Key Engagement Takeaways

1

**The district has a strong historic identity, but needs improved visibility and connection.**

Stakeholders value the district's architecture, stories, and role as a cultural anchor, but feel many residents don't know where the district is or what it represents. Lack of unified branding, wayfinding, and signage makes it hard for visitors to orient themselves or understand its history.

2

**There is a strong desire for a more vibrant, inclusive, and walkable public realm.**

There is a need for people-focused streetscapes with wide sidewalks, shade, seating, public art, gathering spaces, and safe pedestrian areas. Broadway's speed and noise are barriers, and there's interest in slowing traffic and activating alleys and underused spaces.

3

**Activation and small business support are keys to revitalization.**

Desire to see more events in the district, creative storefronts, pop-ups, and incentives to fill empty spaces. There is a desire to see support for local ownership through reduced barriers, financial programs, and better visibility for businesses.

4

**There are opportunities for improvement regarding accessibility and multi-modal connectivity.**

There is a perception that parking is a challenge, with a need for better wayfinding signage from parking areas such as ramps. Physical accessibility for all users needs better conformity to ADA standards. There is a need for better connections to other areas of downtown. Additional multi-modal connectivity is valued, including biking and public transportation infrastructure.

5

**Trust, collaboration, and follow-through are critical.**

Previous plans are perceived as being unfulfilled and have caused skepticism in planning processes. Stakeholders want transparency, accountability, and measurable outcomes that happen in timely fashion. There's a call for a shared, inclusive vision built on genuine collaboration between businesses, property owners, and the city.

6

**There needs to be a balance between preservation and modern needs.**

Preservation is seen as more than saving buildings—it's about keeping them active, relevant, and part of daily life. Stakeholders want to blend historic preservation character with modern amenities and creative uses to make the district appealing to all generations.

## In-Person and Online Activities



### Focus Group Discussions

June 25th, 2025

Pages 4-7

20 interviewees

Focused discussions were held with business owners, historians, property owners, and downtown-based organizations.



### Door Knocking

July 2nd, 2025

Page 8

12 interviewees

Door knocking at local businesses within the Downtown Commercial Historic District.



### Stakeholder Workshop #1

July 16th, 2025

Pages 9-16

25 attendees

A 1.5-hour interactive presentation and input gathering session with stakeholders in the Commercial Historic District.



### Pop Up

August 14, 2025

Pages 17-19

75 booth visitors

A 7.5-hour pop up at Thursdays Downtown at the corner of 1st and 3rd.



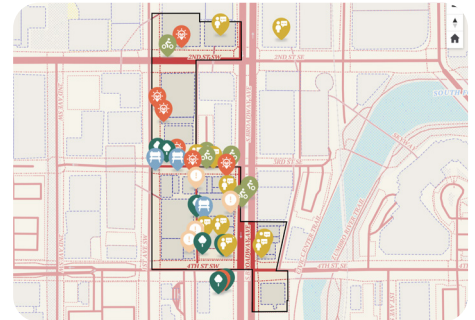
### Stakeholder Workshop #2

Sept 17th, 2025

Pages 20-21

15 attendees

A 1-hour interactive presentation and discussion with stakeholders in the Commercial Historic District.



### Online Engagement

July 16 through August 31, 2025

Pages 22-23

Interactive district comment map

40 contributions

District image submission

12 contributions

### Downtown Organizations Discussion Recap

#### Role of the Historic District in the Broader Community:

Participants highlighted that the Historic District serves as a vital link to the city's origins and architectural history. It preserves a sense of place and offers a connection to the past, even as surrounding development has led to the loss of other older structures. While the area is charming and unique, there are barriers to access—especially for those with mobility challenges—and a general perception that the district lacks vibrancy and is difficult to navigate. Enhancing the public realm could strengthen its role in the community.

#### Challenges Identified:

**Accessibility:** Students and visitors with mobility needs find it difficult to navigate the district, and there are limited no- or low-cost destinations.

**Perception + Engagement:** There's a prevailing sense that the district is disconnected from the rest of downtown.

**Parking:** Parking and employee access are persistent concerns, though discounted programs are being explored.

**Identity:** Many residents would struggle to define where the district actually begins or ends.

**Affordability:** Cost of living, especially for students, is a deterrent to spending time in the district.

#### Opportunities and Ideas:

**Wayfinding + Signage:** Unique-to-the-district signage could reinforce the identity of the district and provide a stronger sense of arrival.

**Programming + Public Space:** Flexible, people-focused design features like wide sidewalks, seating, shade, and public art are seen as important tools. Temporary events and pop-up performances are being tested to better activate downtown spaces.

**Student Involvement:** The presence of multiple universities in downtown offers potential for deeper engagement and co-design efforts, with a focus on creating inclusive, low-cost public experiences.

**Business + Stewardship:** There's interest in strengthening existing local businesses, welcoming new ones, and fostering a sense of generational stewardship over the district.

**Inspirational Models:** Other cities with successful historic districts were mentioned as references, with an emphasis on balancing modern function with historic character.

#### Key Takeaway: Balance Historic Preservation and Modern Needs

Participants supported maintaining the district's architectural integrity while modernizing public spaces and amenities to meet present-day needs. The key is to design with flexibility, accessibility, and inclusivity in mind, ensuring that the district remains relevant and welcoming to all users.

### Property Owners Discussion Recap

#### Perceptions and What Makes the Historic District Special:

Participants described the district as full of character, community, and potential. Its charm comes not only from the architecture but from the sense of place and neighborhood identity it provides. Several individuals emphasized that it's a place people want to be part of. There's a shared belief that the district could become even more vibrant by blending its historic fabric with fresh, creative experiences.

The district is seen as a cultural anchor for the city, with historic significance and unique spaces that make it ideal for small business growth and community-building. It's viewed as a kind of incubator where local entrepreneurs can support each other.

#### Challenges Identified:

**Public Realm + Streetscape:** Broadway is seen as too fast-paced and undesirable to be alongside, with others noting an overall disconnect between the various characters of streetscapes within the district. Cars dominate this part of downtown, making pedestrian movement and visibility difficult. There's strong interest in slowing traffic and potentially pedestrianizing certain areas to improve comfort and encourage gathering.

**Maintenance + Stewardship:** Several participants noted issues with a lack of routine maintenance (weeds, upkeep, neglected spaces) and called for more care and attention to public and private spaces to signal pride and investment.

**Parking + Accessibility:** Short-term parking was noted as essential, especially for businesses reliant on customer turnover. Accessibility for all building users—including owners, tenants, and customers—was emphasized.

**Perception + Identity:** Downtown struggles with public perception in regard to wayfinding and places for locals to want to come and hang out. The district often functions more as a daily pass-through space than a destination. There's a need to elevate its identity and encourage people to want to stop here, especially compared to other vibrant neighborhoods in nearby cities.

#### Opportunities and Ideas:

**Events + Activation:** Hosting small, local events or activations, especially in alleys or underutilized spaces, can highlight the district's personality. Existing murals and artistic elements offer a good foundation to build upon.

**Creative Storefronts:** Building on RDA's initiative to fill empty spaces with creative pop-up uses could further draw people in.

**Village Mentality:** There's an emerging vision of cultivating a "village" atmosphere where personality, heritage, and the public realm support a tight-knit, entrepreneurial community.

**Historic Preservation with Purpose:** Maintaining the buildings isn't just about preserving the past—it's about keeping them alive and relevant for today. When buildings fall into disuse or lose activity, they lose their value and meaning. Investments in preservation must be matched with activation.

#### Key Takeaway: People Invest in the Historic District out of passion

Those who have chosen to own or operate businesses in the district often describe it as a personal dream—to own a brick building downtown or be part of a longer story. The area's cultural richness make it an appealing place to invest, even as it requires creativity and commitment to thrive.

### Local Historians Discussion Recap

#### The Role of the Historic District in the Broader Community

Participants expressed a concern that the historic district lacks stability, identity, and support. There's a prevailing sense that the district is undervalued and in need of strategic activation to re-establish its place in the city's cultural and economic life.

Many noted that the district represents the origin of Rochester, however the historic core has been eroded over time through redevelopment and the migration of commerce and investment elsewhere in the city. Participants emphasized that the district should be recognized for its commercial, milling, and civic history.

There was a strong call to ground efforts for the district in authenticity.

#### Challenges Identified

**Fractured Vision:** A lack of unified direction for the district has left it without momentum. Businesses that left downtown were never interviewed upon their exit, and there's no clear process for learning from past departures why businesses have moved elsewhere. There is a need for an improved business/economic environment downtown, as that is foundational to supporting any public realm changes that come out of this plan.

**Distrust in the Process:** Multiple voices noted a deep skepticism toward planning processes, noting the need for a transparent and authentic process that results in meaningful action.

**Loss of Historic Identity:** Many expressed grief and frustration over the loss of early buildings throughout the greater downtown area.

**Lack of Public Awareness:** There's a significant disconnect between the public and the historic district. Many don't know it exists, or what it represents. There is little signage, storytelling, or visibility to help people understand what came before.

#### Opportunities and Ideas:

**Activate the Edges:** Participants stressed the importance of activating adjacent assets like the Chateau Theatre and Red Owl/Time Theater as they are bookends to the district that can draw people in.

**Interpretive Signage and Tours:** There is strong support for better signage, digital or self-guided walking tours, and the use of tools like QR codes or mobile apps (e.g., Pocket Sightings). These tools can bring to life the district's stories, especially for younger or newer residents.

**Use the Archives:** The History Center of Olmsted County (HCOC) was mentioned as a resource for storytelling, events, and materials to support interpretation efforts. Stakeholders want to showcase the rich archive of photos, maps, and documents to help the public reconnect with downtown's past.

**Historic and Cultural Tourism:** Ideas like trolley tours, micro-events, and neighborhood grants were shared as means to reinvest in the character of the area and foster pride in place.

**Storytelling Through Design:** From murals to small-scale restorations, there's opportunity to embed historic references and narratives into the public realm, and to ensure people feel part of a shared story. Other cities like Milwaukee and Decorah were cited as effective models.

#### Key Takeaway: Create an actionable vision for the future

The group called for a return to stewardship, encouraging residents and institutions alike to take responsibility for downtown's future. There's hope that by aligning many varied voices around a cohesive vision grounded in history and community, the district can shift toward preservation and reinvention.

Historic preservation isn't just about saving buildings—it's about creating a place people want to be, where small businesses can thrive, stories are visible, and the legacy of the city is respected and celebrated. People want to be part of the story of where they live, and this vision plan is an opportunity to embrace that.

## Focus Group Discussions

### Business Owners Discussion Recap

#### Perceptions of the Historic District: What Makes It Special?

Participants described the historic district as creative, lively, walkable, and possessing strong potential, particularly around 3rd Street. The area is valued for its historic architecture, human scale, and potential for cultural activation. Elements like bistro seating, shade, and art opportunities were cited as some of the district's more special and unique features.

There's a shared sense that the district has creative energy, and that back entrances, alleys, and hidden corners could become defining public assets if properly activated and maintained. However, there's also an awareness that the area currently feels more like a working zone than a destination, and lacks cohesive identity or direction.

#### Challenges Identified

**Parking:** Visitors and customers frequently experience confusion over where to park. Ramps can be hard to navigate, and though there are many large ramps surrounding the district, ease of navigating parking isn't clearly communicated.

**Safety + Behavior Issues:** In the evening, sidewalk crowding, and disruptive behavior near late-night venues were reported.

**Lack of Infrastructure:** There's a lack of bike parking, and basic infrastructure, such as sidewalks, is deteriorating. It was noted that decorative elements such as bricks in the sidewalks are disliked by many business owners for maintenance and accessibility reasons.

**Noise + Traffic:** Broadway is seen as too fast and loud, which disrupts the more relaxed atmosphere of commercial spaces that want to take advantage of the outdoors. The tension between cars and people was a recurring theme, with interest in shifting priorities toward public space.

#### Opportunities and Ideas

**Activate the Alleys:** There is strong interest in transforming alleys into safe, vibrant third spaces. With many businesses accessed from the rear, these spaces are already used but under-supported. Suggestions included better lighting, murals, surveillance, signage, and art programming—drawing inspiration from art alley districts in places like Milwaukee.

**Re-imagine Parking + Public Space:** While parking is important, especially for customers unfamiliar with downtown, several participants emphasized a preference for public space over excessive car space, especially on streets like 3rd where walkability is key.

**Strengthen Wayfinding + Branding:** There's a need for clearer wayfinding for parking but also for orienting visitors within the district. There's no shared name or identity for the area, with some using different variations of "Historic District" and others just using addresses. Participants agreed that branding should avoid clichés, and instead reflect the character, creativity, and cultural roots of the area.

#### Key Takeaway: Root the district in a unique identity

There's strong interest in building on the area's creative energy through art installations, better lighting, and thoughtful branding that avoids a commercial feel. Participants emphasized the potential to create a cohesive identity for the district, one rooted in culture, local business, and human-centered design, while also making better use of the adjacent waterfront to connect people more deeply to the space.

# Door Knocking Summary

## Door Knocking

**Goal:** Discuss the Rochester Downtown Commercial Historic District with business owners, property owners, and employees.

**Reach:** 12 Interviewees

**Feedback:**

### 1. Unique Character + Local Pride

Stakeholders see Rochester as a place unlike anywhere else, a place that deeply cares for its people and is full of potential beyond its identity as a medical destination. There's strong appreciation for historic spaces like 3rd Street, and a desire for future development to reflect Rochester's unique character and historic assets.

### 2. Barriers for Local Ownership + Business

While there's local ambition and entrepreneurial spirit, many feel unsupported by current systems. High costs—including property values, taxes, and insurance—create barriers for small business and local building ownership downtown. Stakeholders want to see more local ownership and structures that provide opportunity, not obstacles.

### 3. Public Realm + Amenities

There's strong desire for more landscaping, colorful plantings, parks along the river, and community spaces that invite people in and encourage lingering. Stakeholders would also like to see more coffee shops, lunch spots, and public art to make downtown feel lively and welcoming, especially on weekends, which currently feel empty.

### 4. Parking + Access

Limited and costly parking continues to be a concern. Participants emphasized the need for more free parking to help support downtown businesses and draw in both locals and visitors.



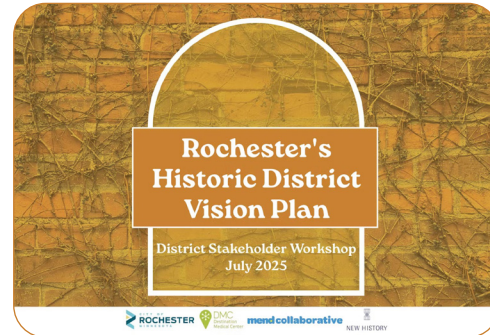
# Stakeholder Workshop #1 Summary

## Stakeholder Workshop #1 Presentation

**Goal:** Update District stakeholders on project research to date, and gather input through an interactive presentation that captured live responses.

**Reach:** 25 Attendees/Participants

**Feedback:**



### Q1: What elements of a public realm do you think are important to the historic district?

1. walkability and access
2. safety
3. signage
4. art
5. lighting

### Q2: What will help foster a stronger sense of place for the district?



### Q3: What elements of a public realm do you think are important to the historic district?



## Stakeholder Workshop #1 Summary

### Q4: What will help reinforce the sense of community within the district?

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#### 1. Community-centered Storytelling and Local Leadership

- Local expertise at the helm of storytelling
- Interpretive signage that tells the history of individual buildings and people
- Signage that expands on the history of the district

#### 2. Equity, Trust + Collaboration

- Trust, true equitable collaboration
- Transparency throughout the process and about outcomes
- Unity among stakeholders where all voices are heard and diverse ideas are respected
- Collaboration

#### 3. Vibrant Public Realm + Gathering Spaces

- Public art
- Play and interaction
- Entertainment options
- Welcoming areas for a variety of people to connect
- Gathering space with a variety of adjacent amenities (businesses, entertainment)

## Stakeholder Workshop #1 Summary

### Q4 CONT.: What will help reinforce the sense of community within the district?

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#### 4. Economic Vitality + Small Business Support

- Stable, unique businesses
- Programs to fill empty storefronts with new businesses
- Creating spaces that are easy to access and full of life
- Placekeeping for locals, not just visitors

#### 5. Identity + Visual Cohesion

- Visibility from afar (driving, skyway, etc.)
- Cohesive visual identity to visitors
- Well-designed structures, creative storefronts, sculpture, quality architecture

#### 6. Accessibility + Inclusion

- Easy access
- Universal design/accessibility
- Keep it interesting for a broad audience (visitors, locals, students, workforce)
- Integration, Imagination, Diversity

#### 7. Destination Value + Sense of Place

- Create a reason for people to want to come through people and places
- Inspired by places like Little Italy and Chinatown—districts full of life and culture
- Authenticity
- Increased housing options to support full-time community presence

## Stakeholder Workshop #1 Summary

### Q5: What can the public realm do to better support small businesses and local ownership?

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#### 1. Visibility + Wayfinding

- Clear and creative signage to direct pedestrians to businesses
- Visuals that attract and inform walkers of what businesses are nearby
- Connectivity to surrounding areas through clear signage and wayfinding
- Let people know what's available—inside and outside—so they're encouraged to stop

#### 2. Inviting + Walkable Environment

- Pedestrian-only areas
- Better pedestrian flow and engagement along walkways
- Slow traffic on Broadway; prioritize walkability
- Safe, accessible, comfortable corridors to move between businesses
- Support for a live-work environment with inviting landscape and transportation options

#### 3. Vibrancy + Placemaking

- Murals and public art
- Inviting spaces with music, art, and interesting businesses
- Culturally relevant spaces
- Spaces that spark joy and offer indoor/outdoor interest

## Stakeholder Workshop #1 Summary

### Q5 CONT.: What can the public realm do to better support small businesses and local ownership?

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#### 4. Support + Incentives for Local Businesses

- Creative incentives for small/local businesses
- Real financial support: subsidies for street-level occupancy
- Offset risks and disruption through phased construction, shared burdens
- Staff-dedicated parking
- Promote businesses and locals first
- Ask local business owners to show up and be part of shaping the vision

#### 5. Accessibility + Parking

- Easy parking options that work for both locals and visitors
- Street parking near business entries
- Transit and transportation options that link people directly to small businesses
- Rethink car-centric design—shift from Broadway funnel to more distributed, accessible entry points

#### 6. Institutional + Government Partnership

- Collaboration between City of Rochester, Mayo Clinic, and business/property owners
- Encourage property owners to activate vacant buildings (e.g. 201 Building)
- Phase public realm construction with businesses in mind
- Avoid duplicating past planning work without implementation (“not reinventing the wheel”)

## Stakeholder Workshop #1 Summary

**Q6: What can happen through the public realm to create better connections throughout downtown to the district?**

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clear signage for other places in the city 

branded pathways connecting to other parts of downtown 

storytelling maps 

clear views to other historic areas 

Rochester history scavenger hunt 

**Q7: What public realm elements that can reflect historic character most excites you?**

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lighting 

hardscape materials 

landscape furnishings (planters) 

signage 

benches 

banners 

## Stakeholder Workshop #1 Summary

**Q8: What is missing from these goals? What do you want to see as an outcome of this planning process?**

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### 1. Accountability + Follow-Through

- Concerns about unfulfilled past plans led to calls for concrete, actionable steps
- Avoid “planning fatigue”—ensure this results in real implementation and impact

### 2. Measurable Outcomes + Investment Support

- Call for financial clarity: who funds what? Are resources in place?
- Outcomes should attract local residents, not just visitors

### 3. Inclusive + Intergenerational Vision

- Ensure inclusive engagement, including diverse voices
- Plan should reflect needs of all ages, especially younger generations, who tend to prefer modern elements

### 4. Unity + Collaboration

- Stakeholders want a shared vision built through true collaboration, open dialogue, and mutual trust
- A unified approach is essential to overcome current disconnection between key areas

### 5. Place-Based Experience + Energy

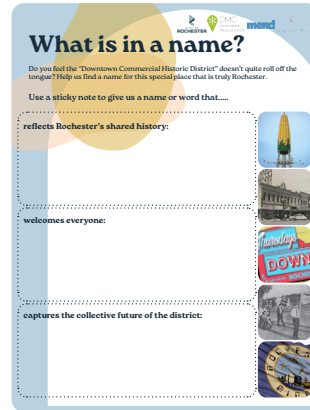
- Prioritize walkability, connectivity, and design that invites people in
- Balance historic character with modern, engaging experiences

# Stakeholder Workshop #1 Summary

## Hands-on-Activities

These activities were used at the end of the Stakeholder Workshop as a hands-on way for participants to give input on specific styles of character, public realm layouts, defining important connections, and telling their story.

Due to the interactive presentation taking priority for the meeting, there was little time remaining for stakeholders to engage with the hands-on activities after the presentation. However, a few attendees were able to participate and contribute to the activities, providing valuable input. Key ideas provided were activation of underutilized areas such as alleyways, and enhancing important connections to the greater downtown fabric. There were also interesting ideas of pop-up programming in public spaces and how this process can help support more community-driven programs like that.



### What is in a name?

What should the Rochester Commercial Historic District be named?



### History Wall

Record personal histories about your connection to Rochester.



### Visual Preferences

What streetscape images could fit well into the Rochester Commercial Historic District?

### Rochester Build-A-Street

Imagine walking down a street in the historic district. What does it look like? Use this base street section to build out your ideal streetscape!



### Build-A-Street

What would you like streets downtown to look and feel like?

### Rochester Connections

A lively downtown keeps a community connected—it's where we shop, gather, and feel part of something bigger. Contribute to this map! Use the materials on the table (note how the materials and colors are reflected in the legend) to help us vision the future of this part of Downtown.



### Design-A-Public Realm

Design your own public realm and draw connections from the Historic District to broader downtown.

# Pop-up Event Summary

## Pop-up Event

**Goal:** Discuss the Rochester Downtown Commercial Historic District with the community.

**Reach:** 75 booth visitors

## Hands-on-Activities

These activities were used at the pop-up event to understand public realm preferences, layout suggestions, important connections to make, historic knowledge and name ideas.



## Project Overview

Introduction to the project and timeline.

## Rochester Connections

A lively downtown keeps a community connected—it's where we shop, gather, and feel part of something bigger. Contribute to this map! Use the materials on the table (refer to legend) to help us vision the future of this part of Downtown.



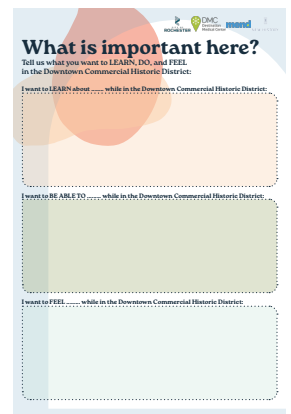
## Mapping Activity

Share streetscape design ideas, opportunities and concerns about downtown Rochester!



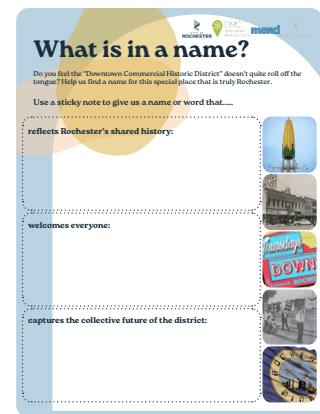
## Public Realm Elements

What public realm elements are important for you to see downtown?



## What do you want to do in the Commercial Historic District?

What is important for you to learn, feel and do downtown?



## What is in a name?

What should the Rochester Commercial Historic District be named?

# Pop-up Event Summary

## Mapping Activity Feedback

### 1. Green space ideas

- more trees
- more greenery

### 2. Gathering space idea

- more public seating
- more spaces to connect and talk

### 2. Transportation ideas

- slow down traffic
- expand transit (more times/days, consistency)
- make 3rd street completely pedestrian
- activate corners

### 3. There's history here

- Susan B Anthony spoke in the Rosa Parks building
- Follow precedents like: La Crosse, Eau Claire, The Freedom Trail (Boston)

### 4. General suggestion

- more activities for children (theatre)
- access to drinking water

### 5. Concern

- Prioritize walkability, connectivity, and design that invites people in
- Balance historic character with modern, engaging experiences

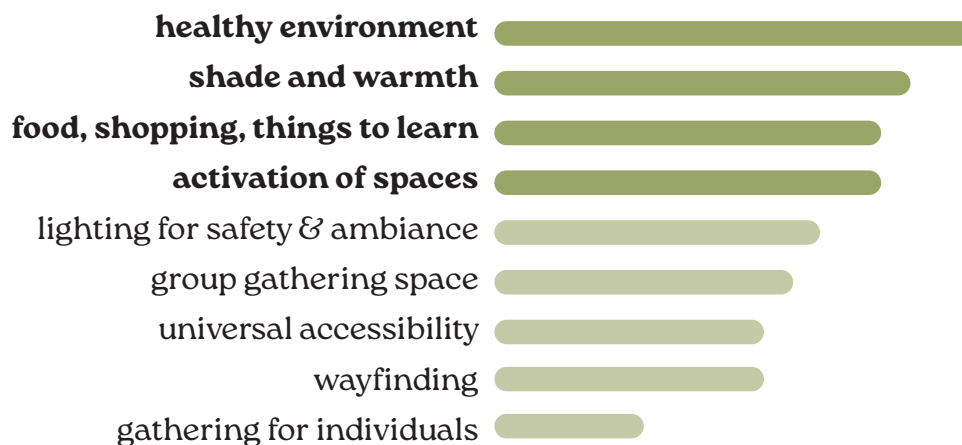


## What is in a name?

People generally refer to the historic district area simply as “Downtown.” Some participants expressed interest in the name “Historic Downtown,” but felt this would only be appropriate if the area presented a more cohesive historic character. At present, only 3rd Street is perceived as having a distinctly historic feel.

## Pop-up Event Summary

### What is important for this public realm?



#### Additional Ideas

- + Farmers market downtown
- + More riverside destinations
- + More tables and seating, and more greenspace
- + More options for sober individuals
- + More S/W bike lanes, maintain bike parking
- + More community events (free)
- + Extend Thursdays downtown into the schoolyear

### What do you want to do in the Commercial Historic District?

#### I want to learn...

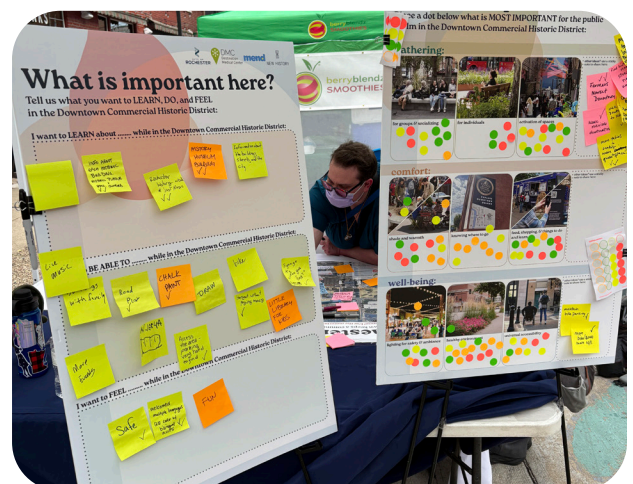
- About each historic building
- Rochester history outside of Mayo
- History museum building (small museum/building about the history of Rochester)

#### I want to be able to...

- Attend more events (Christmas Market)
- Have better access downtown
- Hangout without paying money
- Little library for kids
- Listen to live music

#### I want to feel...

- Safe
- Fun
- Welcomed (bilingual access)



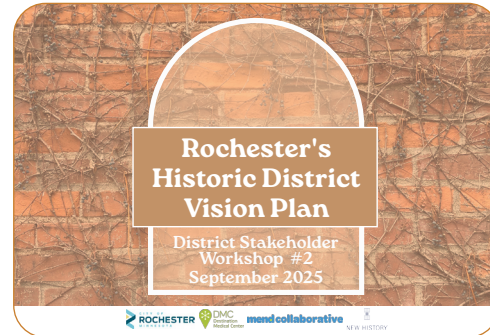
## Stakeholder Workshop #2 Summary

### Stakeholder Workshop #2 Presentation

**Goal:** Update District stakeholders on project research to date, and gather input through an interactive presentation that captured live responses.

**Reach:** 15 Attendees/Participants

**Feedback:**



#### Q1: Provide your thoughts for the vision for 3rd street:

Needs: bright lighting, safety, shade, seating, parking to slow traffic, wifi, restrooms and water fountains.

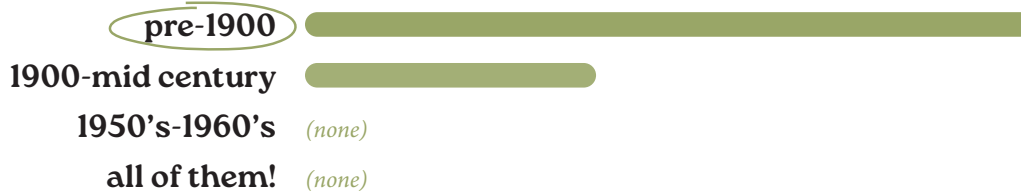
Not needed: constant events, offices on the main street level, private parking

#### Q2: Provide your thoughts on this vision for activating alleys:

Needs: art that provides intrigue to a variety of people (not all historical in nature), a diversity of artists, a plan for waste streams and deliveries to businesses, and a plan for the alley East of Broadway as well.

Not needed: parking for businesses and tenants at 318 commons (they should be given permanent spot in a ramp instead).

#### Q3: Which era within the period of significance is most important to reflect in the district's character in the future?



#### Q4: Should new art within the district be reflective of the district/ city's history, of-the-moment artistic creations, or a blend of both?



## Stakeholder Workshop #2 Summary

### Additional Questions + Answers

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*Note: Questions are from stakeholders as submitted through the Q&A input option during the meeting presentation. Questions have not been edited and are listed below as-submitted. Answers to questions are provided below each question. These questions were discussed in-depth at the stakeholder meeting, and the answers herein are intended to capture the general conversation around each question.*

**Q1: Consider pedestrian serving lighting as a priority if we are trying to create a walkable district.**

**A:** Pedestrian-scale lighting will be a key priority in the vision plan, enhancing both safety and walkability throughout the district.

**Q2: It is important that “economic vitality” means that locals are at the helm of benefiting from the district aka paid for construction, imagination, culture bearing, etc. Can it be included that all RFPs and jobs are fun through the local economy AND historic district prop/bus owners are given first refusal to these opportunities? This would be a trust & energy building conscious action.**

**A:** Working towards increasing local representation and leadership on projects, as appropriate, is an aspiration. Balancing requirements for procurement, and other existing policies currently in place will also be needed. In this process, we will make a recommendation to move toward this direction but also acknowledge that this will likely take extra resources and navigation of the existing policies to change what has been common practice.

**Q3: How does this plan benefit the residential population of the historical district?**

**A:** A vibrant public realm will provide residents a neighborhood with unique character, cohesive design, and critical third spaces to spend time right outside their front door. Vibrant public realms contribute to safe neighborhoods, healthier places to live with trees and landscaping, and supports having pride in one's community.

**Q4: What's the time frame for when this plan would begin development? And how long would development take?**

**A:** The final Vision Plan for the public realm is aimed to be completed around the end of 2025. Projects that come out of, or are implemented, from the Vision Plan are not yet planned. Projects will happen on different timelines depending on complexity, level of additional planning and design, and processes (such as if an RFP for design/development needs to happen, or if the City can implement something internally on a different timeline).

## Stakeholder Workshop #2 Summary

**Q5: Please consider the alley to the east of Broadway too!!**

A: The plan will address how additional spaces near the district can be integrated into the greater vision, including the alley east of Broadway. By looking at these “tendrils” that have a strong connection physically and experientially to the district are important to ensure the district truly weaves into the greater context of downtown.

**Q6: I'd love to feel reassured that this vision will be different than all the other spaces that have been proposed over the years and still are not “activated” as brought up by a stakeholder right now.**

A: This project is an opportunity to formally integrate these previous efforts into a cohesive, adopted City plan that will outline steps for implementation.

**Q7: How can all these efforts be built into medium and long term maintenance plans so that concepts are built into future care and collaboration when DMC is no longer here?**

A: As individual projects are implemented from this Vision Plan, it is recommended that maintenance plans be a part of those next step processes. Maintenance plans are heavily dependent on specific details of a design, and will be much more effectively done during the implementation phase.

**Q8: Murals- they enhance buildings- and I don't believe they damage them. They don't need to be standalone, right?**

A: While murals can enhance buildings, painting historic brick with the wrong type of paint can trap moisture and prevent the brick from “breathing”, which accelerates deterioration. Because these buildings are important historic landmarks, painting *unpainted* masonry generally does not meet the Standards for Rehabilitation, even with paints formulated for masonry, due to potential damage to the masonry. However, repainting *already painted* masonry with paints specially formulated for masonry is generally acceptable, though any new murals must follow the building alteration standards and signage / artwork standards as currently outlined in city policy.

**Q9: How can the vision strike a balance between diff types of district bus. & prop. owners? Eg service oriented (hair, photography, office) have different necessities than retail (st. poking, enticing pay.cust)?**

A: The vibrant businesses within the district all have different needs, and it is a critical goal in this plan to balance all of the needs of these businesses to best support everyone.

**Q10: So, at the end of the day, the entire vision in concept will be entirely up to city council and HPC, when/if/how it/which elements might be implemented?**

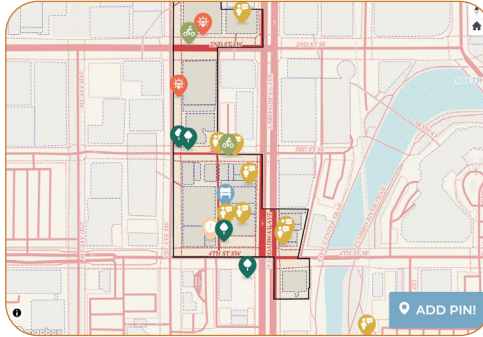
A: As an effort that was initiated by the City Council at the time of historic district designation, this is a City (organizational) planning effort. Our focus on the public realm is primarily related to the fact that the City must maintain this for all the public. We encourage other stakeholders to work with us to bring the concepts to reality. We acknowledge that private property and business owners might also adopt the vision from this effort and move forward with projects under their authority as well.

## Online Mapping and Image Sharing

**Goal:** Collect place-based comments on an online map and gather district-realted modern and historic imagery and videos from the community.

**Reach:** 40 map contributions, 12 image/video contributions

**Feedback:**



## Key Takeaways from Map Comments

### Business mix and character

- Affordable and local businesses that serve both residents and visitors.
- Revitalization of empty/neglected buildings is important.

### Pedestrian, bike, and accessibility improvements

- Expand the pedestrian realm while balancing some short-term parking for customers.
- Improve ADA accessibility and provide more accessible parking.
- Consider consistent, safe bike infrastructure (lanes, bollards, connections to trails).
- Reduce speeding and cut-through traffic; consider pedestrian-only or slow-traffic hours/zones.

### Safety and comfort

- Better pedestrian-scale lighting.
- Safer pedestrian crossings with buffers, improved visibility, and traffic calming.

### Public space and greening

- More trees, native plants, and landscaped areas.
- Desire for plazas, mini-parks, and outdoor gathering spaces.

### Activation and vibrancy

- Interest in more cultural activation, live music, events, and finding ways to activate specific spaces like alleys and empty storefronts.
- Murals and public art suggested to enhance identity.

### Historic preservation

- Protect and celebrate historic buildings.
- Use Rochester's historic architecture to create a unique, walkable district.

## Shared Images from the Community

