

We Heard This, We Did That.

Over the past year as part of the BID effort, the Partnership for Downtown Rochester engaged with the Rochester community at over 35 events, learning from over 1,000+ individuals. Thanks to the public input received from a diverse group of community builders, this process identified clear needs for downtown that business improvement district (BID) services can directly address: Marketing, Events & Activations; Small Business & Livability; Hospitality; and Beautification & Maintenance, along with support for social services.

While it is clear the community desires more out of their downtown, certain concerns arose regarding a potential BID. These concerns are heard. Here's how the feedback was incorporated:

We Heard: Concerns around Private Security

We Did: The Ambassadors will not be a security team. Six proposed Downtown Hospitality Ambassadors will enrich the Downtown Rochester experience by promoting its amenities, activities, and fostering positive connections. They will act as a conduit to services and resources for people in need, connecting them with social service non-profits or government services. A draft Ambassador Code of Conduct has been developed to clarify Ambassadors roles, for which feedback is welcomed and encouraged.

We Heard: Concerns around Gentrification

We Did: The proposed Downtown Rochester BID will support and encourage smart growth practices and the livability of downtown for all income levels. While public policy drives significant change, a future BID can help to encourage growth of housing options for people of all income levels, including more affordable and workforce housing. This is one of the specific intents of the livability focus in the proposed services for a potential Downtown Rochester BID.

Additional focus will include small and local business support and retention, as well as advocacy for smart growth practices that enhance and foster livability. That means participating in, supporting, and encouraging projects, policies, and actions that meet these goals: access to quality parks and open spaces, active transportation and transit accessibility and service delivery, mix of affordability in housing options, and encouraging robust community engagement on downtown projects. By supporting downtown job growth, a potential Downtown Rochester BID will also help to promote equitable employment access across our region.

We Heard: Concerns around Governance and Oversight

We Did: To inform annual activities and priorities, the draft district plan proposes a co-governance model for the governing board. Board committees include community members with full board voting rights. Committees will initiate the yearly proposed budget and services proposal, which will be subject to approval by the elected officials of the Rochester City Council.

While State law dictates a majority of board members represent property owners, the draft district plan proposes at least: 2 non-owner tenants, 2 residents, 1 local artist, 1 nonprofit leader, 1 retailer/small business owner, 1 hospitality leader, 1 residential landlord, and at least a member appointed by government officials: the City of Rochester's Mayor, CFO, and City Council, respectively.

The draft plan proposes continual evaluation and benchmarking of services and programs, their design, and impacts. The Downtown Rochester BID would be a learning organization dedicated to regular community listening, reflection, and revision. Evaluation and benchmarking data will be shared publicly on a regular basis.

We Heard: Desire for People Care and Support

We Did: The Downtown Rochester BID will forge and maintain trusted relationships with social service agencies, non-profits, and other entities offering services for people in need within the downtown Rochester community. 7% of the BID budget will support supplemental services by social service entities in the core area of downtown.

We Heard: Concern for Art and Artists

We Did: The Downtown Rochester BID will focus on key tenets of livability and smart growth to further a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable downtown. It will participate in, support, and encourage projects, policies, and actions that meet these goals. This includes supporting the growth of access to affordable housing for local artists and spaces for cultural amenities. Additionally, the Downtown Rochester BID can provide support for partner events and events run by other non-profits or local arts programs.

Downtown Rochester will solidify its position as the region's historic and innovative center of bustling community activity. Residents, workers, and visitors will enjoy beautiful and energetic public spaces, including a sensational Riverway, with a dynamic collection of arts, music, culture, shopping, living, and educational and employment opportunities that are accessible to everyone. Active street life will make all feel welcome and safe.

— A Vision for Downtown Rochester