Rochester Subarea Plan Update

December 15, 2020

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

The Rochester Subarea consists of 8,619 acres in southwest Thurston County, located approximately 15 miles south of Olympia. The subarea is bounded by Old Highway 99 and Interstate 5 on the east, Littlerock Road flanks the western and northern boundaries, and James Road on the southern boundary. Unincorporated Rochester is composed of primarily low-density rural residential lands with a small commercial core at the heart of downtown Rochester. Roughly five percent of the subarea is utilized for commercial and industrial uses, while less than one percent of lands are used for farm and agriculture use.

The Rochester Subarea abuts and surrounds the Grand Mound Urban Growth Area; however Grand Mound has its own separate Subarea Plan, which is currently under development. Most often, these communities are referred to interchangeably, and many area residents feel strongly that they are one community.

Purpose

The purpose of the Rochester Subarea Plan update is a document to help serve as a guide for future growth of the community over the next twenty years. This plan is an update to the 1996 Rochester Subarea Plan and compliments the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan, in addition to goals and objectives of Washington State's Growth Management Act.

Vision

Rochester is a rural residential community that prides itself on its rural charm with an emphasis on agriculture, open spaces and small close-knit community.

"Rochester would benefit from more commercial development in the downtown strip…" – Rochester resident

"…Retain small town feel, yet smoothly develop business core". - Rochester resident

"More green open space that is also modern while still retaining rural flair". – Rochester High School Students

When asked about the future vision of their community, the input from the community residents was consistent with the two visions from over twenty years ago.

Visions from 1996 Rochester Subarea Plan:

- *Preservation of the rural character, agricultural uses and sensitive environments as keys to quality of life, and economic diversity as well as environmental and human health. (1996)*
- *Support of the economic health of the Subarea by designating the areas for adequate future residential and commercial expansion and support continuation of agricultural pursuits to promote economic diversity. (1996)*

During public outreach with the Rochester community in 2018 and 2019, residents were asked if these vision statements still resonated with their community. Most residents felt that these statements were still relevant to their community today. An additional interactive activity queried the attendees about what words best describes their community. Words like "*quiet*", "*rural*", and "*close-knit*" were used to best characterize Rochester.

A specific outreach effort was completed in the spring of 2018 with a group of students at Rochester High School to gain perspective from a younger demographic and to engage them in a visioning exercise about the future of their community. The following statement best sums up the vision and identity for their community.

 "Rochester is a quiet, unique, and close-knit rural community with an urban flair".
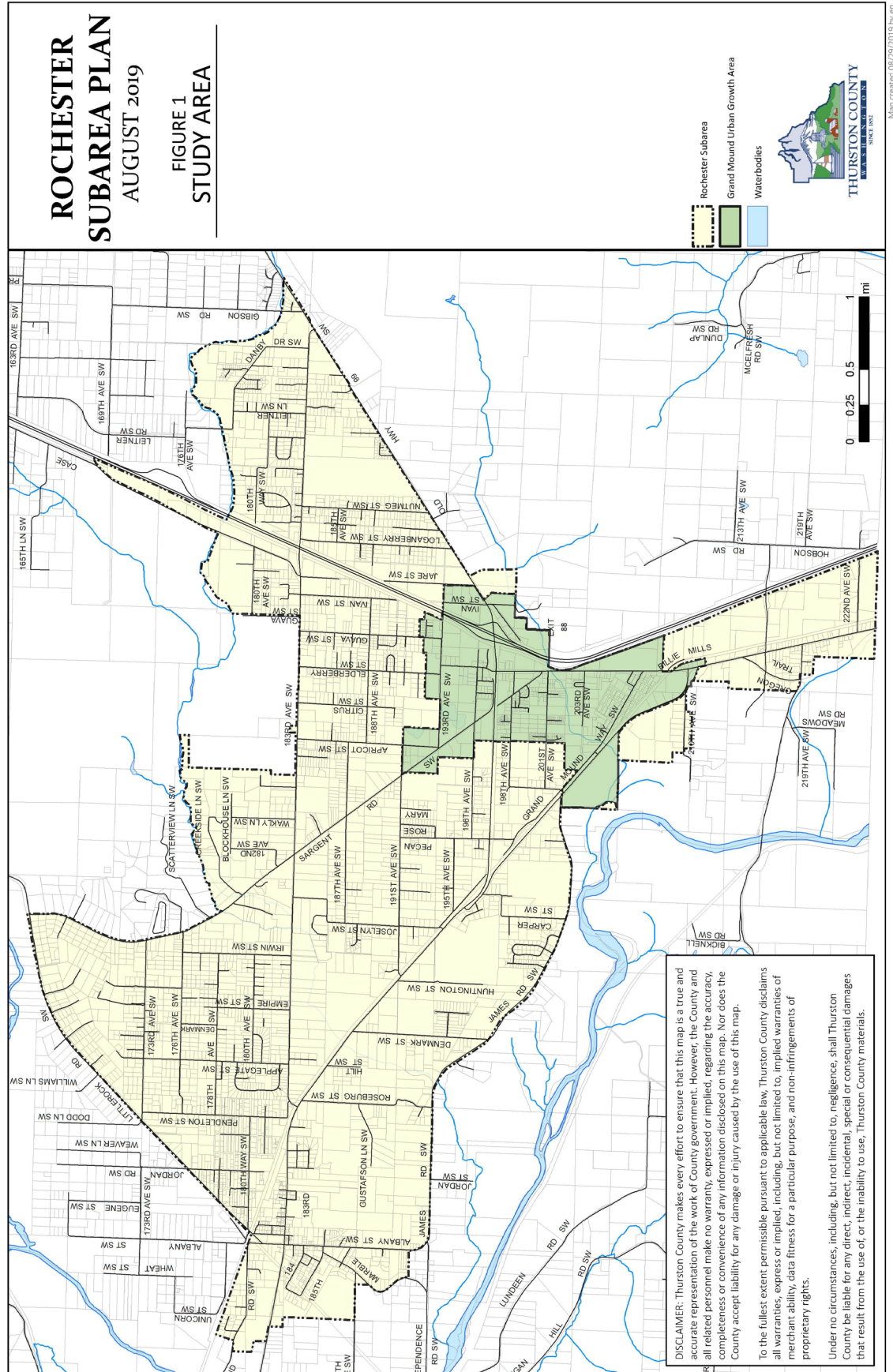
Land Use

Rochester Subarea is composed primarily of low-density residential housing with parcels one to five acres in size. A commercial core is the heart of downtown Rochester located along US Highway 12, near the intersection at Albany Street, that is composed of a local businesses and Rochester Middle School. Agriculture and Open Space lands compose less than 1 percent of the total acreage within the subarea.

The land use in the Rochester subarea is consistent with the County's current Land Use designations found in the Comprehensive Plan and on the Official Zoning Map. There is no distinguishing zoning or land use for the Rochester Subarea. The definition of each land use designation can be found in the Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 2, Land Use, and is displayed on the Future Land Use Map (Map L-1) in the Comprehensive Plan. The following land use designations are found in the Rochester Subarea boundaries.

LAND USE TYPE	GROSS ACRES	PERCENT (%) OF TOTAL ACRES
Long Term Agriculture	1.4	0.02%
Residential LAMIRD 1/1 (RL1/1)	1,758.9	20.41%
Rural Residential Resource (RRR1/5)	6,348.3	73.66%
Rural 1/20 (R1/20)	37.9	0.44%
Public Parks Trails and Preserves (PP)	0.7	0.01%
Neighborhood Convenience Commercial (NCC)	7.3	0.08%
Rural Commercial (RCC)	443.0	5.14%
Rural Resource Industrial (RRI)	21.3	0.25%
TOTAL	**8,618.8**	**100.0%**

Source: Thurston Regional Planning Council, 2019

ROCHESTER
SUBAREA PLAN
AUGUST 2019

FIGURE 1
STUDY AREA

Rochester Subarea
Grand Mound Urban Growth Area
Waterbodies

THURSTON COUNTY
WASHINGTON
SINCE 1852

0   0.25   0.5   1
mi

DISCLAIMER: Thurston County makes every effort to ensure that this map is a true and accurate representation of the work of County government. However, the County and all related personnel make no warranty, expressed or implied, regarding the accuracy, completeness or convenience of any information disclosed on this map. Nor does the County accept liability for any damage or injury caused by the use of this map.

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Natural Resources

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The Rochester Subarea lies nestled in a broad reach of prairie and wooded landscape located in the Chehalis River basin. Most of the region is characterized by relatively lowland flat topography, with floodplains along the Chehalis River. Wetlands are located along the Scatter Creek drainage basin and in some undeveloped areas.

More information relating to critical aquifers, wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat areas, floodplains, and geologically hazardous areas for all rural unincorporated county are part of Chapter 9, Environment, Recreation, and Open Space of the Comprehensive Plan.

Inventory of Critical Areas			
Type	**Subtype**	**Acreage**	**% of Total Subarea**
Oak Woodlands	Conifer Deciduous	201.35	2.34
	Oak Deciduous	194.27	2.54
Wetlands	Wetlands & Hydric Soils	420.78	4.88
Floodplains	100 Year Floodplain	755.10	8.76
	500 Year Floodplain	0.51	0.01

Source: Thurston Geodata, 2019

Population and Housing Growth

Projections for Growth

Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) is the official agency that projects growth and employment forecasts for all of Thurston County. TRPC coordinates with the State Office of Financial Management (OFM) in determining realistic population and employment projections for the County. TRPC then allocates that growth by planning areas within the County.

The growth projections for Rochester were developed as a part of the subarea population allocation model by the TRPC. The projections are based on past growth trends, including the most recent building permit data. Growth projections by 5-year increments for the period from 2010 to 2040 for the Rochester Subarea are presented in the table below.

GROWTH PERIOD	PROJECTED POPULATION INCREASE	TOTAL PROJECTED POPULATION	PERCENT INCREASE (ANNUALIZED)
2010-2015	160	8,940	0.36%
2015-2020	290	9,230	0.65%
2020-2025	300	9,530	0.65%
2025-2030	320	9,850	0.67%
2030-2035	420	10,270	0.85%
2035-2040	340	10,610	0.66%
TOTAL	**1,830**	**10,610**	**0.69%**

Source: Thurston Regional Planning Council, 2014

According to the 2014 Thurston Regional Planning Council, Small Area Population Estimates and Population and Employment Forecast Work Program, there was a reported population of 8,780 residents for the Rochester

planning area according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The most recent TRPC estimates in 2017, reported an estimated population of 9,210 people for the area. Based on the TRPC 2019 forecast, they estimated a current total population of 9,400 people residing in the Rochester Subarea.

However, these estimates vary based on the sampling jurisdiction. There are four sampling populations for the region based on planning area, school district, and fire districts. The 2014 TRPC population estimate by School District, estimated a total of 14,460 residents for 2017. The 2014 TRPC population estimate based on Thurston County Fire District estimates Rochester's population at 12,780 in 2017. Whereas, the 2014 TRPC population estimate based on Planning Area, estimates the 2017 population at 9,210 residents. There is a discrepancy of over 5,000 people depending on the sample size. However, despite the sample distribution, TRPC projections and forecast estimate an overall slow and steady growth of less than one percent per year over the next 40 years.
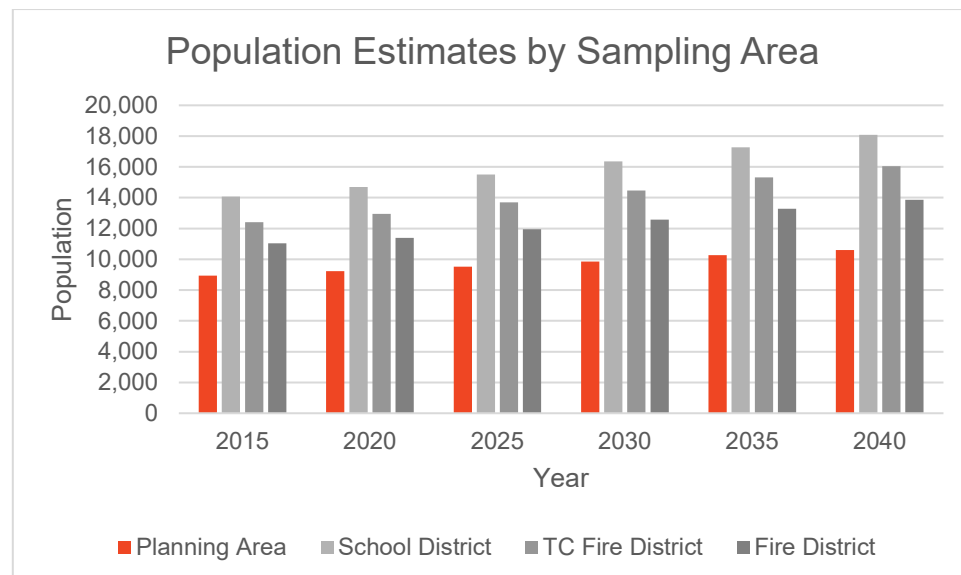
Source: Thurston Regional Planning Council, 2014

Housing Estimates and Forecast

According to the 1990 Census, there were 1,832 total housing units within the Rochester Study Area. During the 2010 U.S. Census, there was an estimated 3,470 total housing units in the subarea. The 2014 TRPC Housing Estimates and Forecast projects a slow steady increase of approximately 2.5% to 3% in housing units, which varies from 10 to 20 new units per year. Between the years 2010 to 2040, a total of 600 new additional housing units is forecasted, which is an increase of approximately 15% over the next thirty years. Additional housing information for unincorporated county can be found in Chapter 4, Housing, of the Comprehensive Plan.

YEAR	PROJECTED HOUSING UNITS	PROJECTED INCREASE IN HOUSING UNITS	PROJECTED % INCREASE
2010	3470		
2015	3520	50	1.4%
2020	3610	90	2.5%
2025	3720	110	3.0%
2030	3840	120	3.1%
2035	3960	120	3.0%
2040	4070	110	2.7%
TOTAL (2010-2040)		600	15.7%

Source: Thurston Regional Planning Council, 2014

Transportation

U.S. Route 12 (US 12) serves as the primary highway through the Rochester Subarea connecting to Interstate 5 in the east and Aberdeen to the west. In addition to serving as a major thoroughfare, US 12 also serves as Rochester's Main Street for the businesses located near the intersection at Albany Street. Railways also have a presence in the region, transporting freight through the subarea and is designated as a freight economic corridor by the state.

Main Street Rochester Project

In 2016, a collaborative effort between Thurston County, Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), received a federal Surface Transportation Grant (STP) to study a one-mile segment of US 12 located between 183rd Avenue and Bailey's IGA. The Main Street Rochester project's primary focus was to:

- Improve safety and multimodal mobility;
- Increase infrastructure investments in the area;
- Enhance Rochester's sense of place; and
- Encourage economic vitality.

The project team completed extensive outreach efforts with the community and businesses through open houses, workshops, community focus groups and surveys. As a result of these efforts, the community provided insight to safety, transportation, mobility, placemaking and economic vitality for Rochester. The deliverables from this collaborative effort is composed of three sections: a Current Conditions Report – findings for project area; a Multimodal Transportation Action Plan - action plan for improvements along US 12; and a Final Report – summary of findings.

The Transportation Action Plan identified the Rochester community's priority actions for future construction: frontage improvements, a center turn lane, the Rochester-Grand Mound Trail, and US 12 and 183rd intersection improvements. The project was split into four phases based on location and priority (see image to left). Development of this Action Plan included workshops with the public, businesses, and technical experts, and a right-of-way survey performed by WSDOT.

The plan identified 26 actions that would have a positive impact on safety and mobility, infrastructure investments, economic vitality, and placemaking. These were organized into four categories:

- **4 Maintenance Actions.** These actions include ways to maintain existing transportation facilities and infrastructure investments.
- **10 Multimodal Construction Projects.** These actions result in actual construction, redesign, or repurposing of transportation facilities.
- **4 Other Construction Projects.** These actions result in actual construction or installation of items that are not transportation facilities.
- **8 Planning Projects.** These actions result in a plan or study that may be necessary before actual construction or other action can occur.

Source: Main Street Rochester Multimodal Transportation Plan, 2019

The table below highlights the actions identified in the 2019 Multimodal Transportation Action Plan.

Main Street Rochester Action Items
Maintenance Actions
• Restripe lanes and add lane edge buffers along US 12 • Clean out and repair stormwater facilities • Regularly sweep the highway to reduce debris in travel lanes and paved shoulders • Improve the visibility of highway traffic signs and signals
Multimodal Construction Projects
• Install frontage improvements along US 12 • Establish a shared use trail between Rochester and Grand Mound • Where appropriate, establish a center turn lane on US 12 • Improve the intersection at US 12 and 183rd Ave SW • Install pedestrian crossing improvements along US 12 • Improve the intersection at US 12 and Albany St SW • Establish a shared use access to Bailey's IGA • Establish a shared use access to Rochester Middle School • Install frontage improvements along Albany St SW between Littlerock Rd and Albany Park Ln SW/185th Ave SW • Install frontage improvements along Little Rd SW between Albany St SW and 180th Way SW
Other Construction Projects
• Install wayfinding signage for important community landmarks • Install gateway signage along US 12 near Albany St SW and 183rd Ave SW • Establish a park and pool or park and ride lot in Rochester • Improve existing transit stops on US 12 in Rochester
Planning Projects
• Develop a pole yard access plan • Update the regional trails plan • Create a Rochester Middle School walking map • Establish a street grid connection plan • Update street standards for the Rochester area • Inventory stormwater facilities associated with US 12 • Perform a study of drainage patterns in the Rochester area • Adopt a complete streets ordinance for Thurston County

Source: Main Street Rochester Multimodal Transportation Plan, 2019

In addition, the project team partnered with SCJ Alliance to develop conceptual layout plans for the various phases. These renderings provide context and examples of what the community envisions for the future of downtown Rochester.

Figure 2. Conceptual design of Phase 1 – US 12 Cross-section
Source: Main Street Rochester Multimodal Transportation Plan, 2019

A complete list of the reports and data for this project can be found in the References and on the Thurston Regional Planning Council project website.

Figure 3. Conceptual design of US 12 at Bend Street Perspective
Source: Main Street Rochester Multimodal Transportation Plan, 2019

Other transportation information for unincorporated county is included in Chapter 5, Transportation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Capital Facilities & Utilities

Rochester continues to have relatively limited amount of public infrastructure within the subarea and is characterized by rural levels of service for most public facilities. The Capital Facilities and Utilities for all unincorporated rural county is described in Chapter 6, Capital Facilities, and Chapter 7, Utilities, of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Sewer and Water Systems

There are no public sanitary sewerage or potable water systems presently within the subarea. Every property must provide on-site sewage systems within the Rochester Subarea. More than two-thirds of development within the subarea rely on individual wells for domestic water supply, and 85 percent of residential units depend on on-site sewage systems to treat household and commercial wastewater. There are several community drainfields that serve a limited number of isolated higher density residential developments, including several mobile home parks.

The Rochester Water Association was established in 1969 and is a non-profit member owned water company with an elected board that oversees the daily operations. The association provides a community water system servicing 1.6 square miles of residents within the subarea. The water system is a Group A system that consists of seven wells with an annual water right of 376.4 acre-feet (122,650,000 gallons) per year. The Rochester Water Association currently has 683 active connections and serves approximately 1,698 residents. According to the Washington State Department of Health, the Association is approved for up to 1,540 connections.

Water consumption information for the existing subarea is based on water rights data available from Thurston County Water Planning. The data shown on the table below indicates that the two dominant water users in the Scatter Creek basin are aquaculture (fish propagation) and agriculture (irrigation). These users collectively account for more than 75 percent of the total groundwater consumption within the basin. Domestic and public water supply users account for less than 18 percent of total annual consumption.

Location Type	Groundwater Pumping (Acre-Feet)	Water Rights Permitted (Acre-Feet)	Groundwater Pumping (Permit-Exempt, Acre-Feet)	Total Groundwater Pumping (Acre-Feet)
Well - Fish Propagation	7,146	24,000		**7,146**
Well - Irrigation	5,158	9,000	399	**5,557**
Well - Public Supply Group A System	1,324	900		**1,324**
Well - Public Supply Group B System	49		143	**192**
Well - Livestock			616	**616**
Well - Industrial	51	350	246	**296**
Well - Commercial	128		21	**149**
Well - Domestic General	145	100	969	**1,114**
	14,000	**34,350**	**2,393**	**16,393**

Source: Thurston County Water Planning, 2019

Stormwater Systems

Stormwater improvement projects currently under construction in the Rochester region is the Albany Street Stormwater Pond located on Albany Street SW near US 12. The project will allow rainwater and stormwater runoff to drain from nearby streets into the pond. This project is funded by a $1.1 million grant from Washington State Department of Ecology, with additional costs for property, construction and design paid for by County Stormwater fees.

Stormwater facilities and maintenance associated with US 12, including right-of-way, is managed by Washington State Department of Transportation.

Refer to Thurston County Public Works Stormwater Utility about additional regional project and the Stormwater Management Program Plan (2019) for more information.

Figure 4. Albany Street Pond under construction, 2019.
Source: Thurston County Stormwater, 2019

Schools

The Rochester School District No. 401 services both the Rochester Subarea and the Grand Mound Urban Growth Area, in addition to surrounding areas that reach into Lewis and Grays Harbor Counties. The District operates four main schools providing public education for grades K-12, in addition to an alternative high school. Facilities include the Rochester Primary School (K-2),

Grand Mound Elementary (3-5), Rochester Middle School (6-8), Rochester High School (9-12), and HEART High School (9-12). The schools and their respective 2018 enrollment figures are shown in the table below.

In 2018, the total enrollment was 2,303 students, an increase of 36% from the enrollment count in 1995 of 1,694 students. Enrollment projections by the District (Source: OSPI and OFM) indicate a continued growth in student population with a total of approximately 2,447students by the year 2025. Rochester School District is currently at capacity and most schools have modular buildings on site to house the growing student population.

SCHOOL	GRADE LEVEL	ENROLLMENT	MAXIMUM PERMANENT CAPACITY*
Rochester Primary	K-2	539	507
Rochester Primary	Pre	25	
Grand Mound Elementary	3-5	514	420
Rochester Middle School	6-8	529	504
Rochester High School	9-12	666	510
HEART Alternative School	9-12	30	0
	TOTAL	**2,303**	**1941**

Source: Rochester School District 401, 2019
*Provides the OSPI assessment of the maximum enrollment capacity of each permanent educational facility. In accordance with accepted facility planning practice, interim housing is not included in this assessment.

The Rochester School District contracted with OAC Services to complete their Long Range Capital Facilities Plan in 2019. The plans purpose was to identify District needs, prioritize capital facilities requests, determine costs and develop financing strategies. The school district is faced with many challenges with facilities planning and growing enrollments. The plan addresses capacity

issues, safety, long-term viability of the existing facilities, and identifies solutions for district-wide planning. The Long Range Plan provides recommendations for the phasing of remodeling and construction projects, in addition to future school locations. The table below provides a summary of the existing facilities and the number of portable units located at each school site for the Rochester School District. Further information and the completed Long Range Plan can be found on the Rochester School District website.

ROCHESTER SCHOL DISTRICT EXISTING FACILITIES							
School	**Grades Housed**	**Site/ Acres**	**Year Built**	**Building Area***	**Additions / Remodel**	**Total Gross Area**	**Number of Portable Classrooms**
Rochester Primary School	K-2	10.50**	2002	45,711		48,945	14
Grand Mound Elementary	3-5	12.25**	1970 2003	37,827	0	41,618	12
Rochester Middle School	6-8	14.48	1961 2003	4,918	54,074	65,595	7
Rochester High School	9-12	54.38**	1989	66,409		75,921	14
HEART High School	9-12	0.00**	-	0		0	2

Source: Rochester School District 401, 2019

*Building Area accounts for the SCAP eligible permanent building areas.
** RPS, GMES, and RHS are on a shared parcel.

Economic Development

Rochester's economic base is the group of businesses located in the commercial corridor along US 12. Most of the small businesses are locally owned and run. Many of the businesses have been in operation for over 10 years. The small downtown corridor serves as the heart of the community with cafes, shops, and a grocery store. Rochester works to improve the economic base through business creation, expansion, and partnerships.

The community identified, during the Main Street Rochester project, that this area has the highest potential for economic development and business development. There is a vested interest in expanding and diversifying the local businesses to promote economic health and resilience. Rochester serves as major thoroughfare that could serve as a destination for travelers. The Rochester Chamber of Commerce and local businesses are active participants in the South Thurston Economic Development Initiative (STEDI) that serves to help expand economic development efforts in their community.

Figure 5. Businesses located along US 12 in downtown Rochester.
Source: TRPC, 2018

For additional information about economic development in rural unincorporated areas, refer to Chapter 8, Economic Development of the Comprehensive Plan.

Environment, Recreation, & Open Space

Parks and Recreation

There are few organized park and recreational facilities within the Rochester Subarea. Limited facilities such as baseball/football fields, running track, and basketball courts are provided by the Rochester School District at the elementary, middle and high schools. However, access is limited for non-school use of these facilities. The Rochester School District permits public access to Independence Park, located just north of the District Offices located at US 12 and Albany Street.

There are also several privately-operated recreational facilities in the area, including Hoss Field baseball park located on 196th Avenue S.W., the Grand Mound Driving Range along Old Highway 9 and a motocross track located on Jare Street. In addition, there are also several regional outdoor recreation areas adjacent to the Study Area, including the Scatter Creek Game Preserve, Capitol Forest, and Black River boat launch facility.

The County is currently working with the non-profit community group of Hoss Fields as a partnership to provide funding for future field renovations and improvements as part of Community Development Block Grant. A $100,000 grant was received for Public Facilities and Infrastructure Improvements for Fiscal Year 2019. The grant will upgrade the existing sports complex and signage and "provide recreational opportunities to 3,330 individuals in approximately 1,280 households of which nearly fifty-five percent are low *to moderate* [sic] income" (2019-2020 CDBG Action Plan).

Archeological & Historic Resources

Swede Hall

For over 80 years, Swede Hall, located at Albany Street & 185th Avenue SW, has served as the local Rochester meeting hall for events and is a valuable community resource. Portions of the original hall originated from Independence Valley and are almost 120 years old. Swede Hall was a Royal Order of the Runeberg, similar to a grange hall, and is the pride of the original Swedish and Finnish settlers of the region. Their local descendants honor their heritage annually in the summer months on Swede Day with celebration that includes a parade, food and family festivities held at Swede Hall.

Local Indigenous History: Chehalis Tribe, "People of the Sand"

For many centuries, the Upper and Lower Chehalis people lived in villages along the Chehalis River. They fished the Chehalis, Black, Cowlitz, and Satsop rivers. The Chehalis hunted and gathered from the mountains, across the prairies, to Grays Harbor and in the lower Puget Sound. They lived in cedar longhouses with one end open to the water from which they received a bounty of salmon and other river-based sustenance. The Salish-speaking people thrived for a long time in this region until colonization and their ancestral lands were lost. Their current reservation was established in1860 and is in Thurston and Grays Harbor Counties, near Oakville (Chehalistribe.org, 2019).

Today, the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation operate several thriving enterprises such as the Lucky Eagle Casino, Eagles Landing Hotel, the Great Wolf Lodge, End of the Trail and Talking Cedar. In addition, they have recently built new community and wellness centers that have dramatically enhanced the quality of life for their people.

Goals and Actions

Land Use

Goal 1. Provide sufficient land use capacities to maintain the rural character and projected population forecasts for Rochester.

Action 1.1. Monitor land supply and use to ensure a variety of rural densities within the Rochester Subarea.

Action 1.2. Help to focus future growth in the adjacent Grand Mound Urban Growth Area and other areas meant to accommodate higher densities.

Goal 2. Provide land availability for public and private gathering places and diverse opportunities for arts, recreation, entertainment, and culture.

Action 2.1. Consider public-private partnership opportunities for community squares, cooperative markets, public art walks, and outdoor festivals that focus on the community's identity and sense of place.

Multimodal Transportation (Roads, Walkability, and Bicycling)

Goal 1. Develop walkways, crosswalks, and bicycle routes to enhance the walkability, safety and economic development of Rochester.

Action 1.1. Provide walkways and crosswalks along US 12 from Albany Street to 183rd to enhance current economic development and accessibility in downtown Rochester.

Action 1.2. Refer to and utilize the Rochester Main Street Transportation Study as a tool and resource.

Action 1.3. Expand future connections to and from Rochester with county-wide multiuse trails to create "partner cities" for parallel Economic Development opportunities (Gate-Belmore and Yelm-Tenino Trails).

Goal 2. Work with Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to attempt to reduce traffic issues in the Rochester Subarea.

Action 2.1. Encourage WSDOT to reduce and slow the truck traffic through the downtown core of Rochester.

Action 2.2. Consider alternative traffic solutions to alleviate the heavy truck traffic through Rochester along US 12.

Goal 3. Enhance the aesthetic values of the streetscape in Rochester as identified in the Main Street Rochester Multimodal Transportation Action Plan and Complete Streets study.

Action 3.1. Consider developing design standards for the downtown Rochester core with a focus on aesthetics of streets, sidewalks, and associated amenities.

Action 3.2. Ensure design standards are implemented within the Rochester Subarea, specifically the downtown corridor, to help create a sense of place.

Goal 4. Work to improve safety for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles with the Rochester Subarea.

Action 4.1. Coordinate with WSDOT to improve pedestrian and bicycle alternatives, including safety improvements, especially along US 12.

Action 4.2. Encourage connectivity between existing routes and future developments.

Goal 5. Work to ensure that adequate and sufficient parking is available for businesses and customers in the Rochester downtown core.

Action 5.1. Through public-private partnerships review the existing public parking availability and accessibility within downtown Rochester.

Action 5.2. Utilizing the parking study, consider alternatives, updates, or changes to parking requirements and availability within downtown Rochester.

Action 5.3. As feasible, implement incentive-based parking programs within the Rochester downtown business core, such as shared-use parking and on street parking.

Goal 6. Establish a collective community identity for Rochester.

Action 6.1. Identify and locate community-oriented public facilities and features within the Rochester Subarea.

Action 6.2. Work with the community to consider highlighting the historic features and characteristics identified in Rochester through preservation and conservation.

Action 6.3. Preserve the small-town character of the Rochester Subarea through community planning and development and design standards.

Goal 7. Provide Transportation Improvements that Enhance Economic Development

Action 7.1. Utilize the Rochester Main Street Study to improve safety, aesthetics and design guidelines for the downtown Rochester corridor.

Capital Facilities and Utilities

Goal 1. Support the development of a comprehensive approach to stormwater management that encourages coordination between transportation, stormwater, and private development projects.

Action 1.1. Identify areas needing improved and/or updated stormwater drainage infrastructure within the Rochester Subarea.

Action 1.2. Involve the Rochester community in the assessment and prioritization of stormwater facility projects through the Storm and Surface Water Advisory Board.

Goal 2. Ensure stormwater management systems that utilize and preserve natural drainage systems, such as streams, and construct facilities that complement these systems by taking advantage of opportunities for filtration, infiltration, and flow control where feasible.

Action 2.1. Require of the use of permeable surfaces and other Low Impact Development (LID) technologies in new building construction and property development.

Action 2.2. Mitigate impacts of stormwater management regulations on private property by hosting meetings, workshops, and trainings with property owners and the community when new regulations are proposed.

Action 2.3. Determine cumulative impacts of development on surrounding properties and help to minimize the negative consequences of stormwater runoff on properties.

Goal 3. Explore options for alternative wastewater treatment to provide flexibility to support businesses and future business growth within the Rochester business core, while maintaining ground water quality.

Action 3.1. As feasible, consult with the County and work with local businesses to explore options for improvements and expansion.

Goal 4. Continue Regional Stormwater Improvements.

Action 4.1. Develop a natural approach for future stormwater management to implement projects that control flows, reduce flooding, and enhance water quality.

Action 4.2. Build and maintain Rochester Albany Street Stormwater pond to ensure proper drainage of surrounding streets and improve water quality.

Economic Development

Goal 1. Achieve diversification of Rochester's economic base through supporting the establishment and expansion of locally-owned businesses within the downtown core.

Action 1.1. Collaborate with the Rochester Chamber of Commerce, South Thurston Economic Development Initiative (STEDI), Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC), Thurston County and other organizations to foster and promote a business-oriented atmosphere that supports the local businesses in downtown Rochester.

Action 1.2. Identify and encourage business opportunities that may support the local economy and community.

Goal 2. Support the maintenance of local businesses.

Action 2.1. Encourage and promote small business development that builds projects compatible with Rochester's community values.

Action 2.2. Develop Partnerships with the future Southwest Washington Regional Agricultural Business & Innovation Park.

Goal 3. Support tourism to enhance the local community.

Action 3.1. Promote and strengthen the development of a downtown Rochester core along US 12, between 183rd and Bailey's IGA, as identified in the Main Street Rochester Study Project.

Action 3.2. Facilitate the development of a downtown way-finding system consistent with the area identity to create a sense of place for Rochester.

Action 3.3. Foster partnerships with the Rochester Chamber of Commerce, STEDI, EDC, Experience Olympia & Beyond, and other organizations to promote tourism and business development.

Parks, Trails and Open Space

Goal 1. Coordinate an integrated network of spaces that could expand recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors and utilizes the open space amenities and natural environment.

Action 1.1. Identify future park sites and related property acquisition needs areas that could benefit the Rochester community.

Action 1.2. As feasible, work with non-profit groups, the County, and other organizations to acquire land for open space conservation, trails network, and future parks.

Goal 2. Coordinate efforts among the community, Rochester School District, and the County to provide and maintain existing and future parks and fields to support sports, recreational, educational, and social activities for the community.

Action 2.1. Improve and maintain park maintenance at existing facilities.

Action 2.2. Implement upgrades and improvements to Independence Park and Hoss Fields.

Action 2.3. As feasible, partner with non-profit groups and other organizations to locate funding opportunities for future improvements.

Action 2.4. Consult with county, state agencies and local organizations to provide parks, open space, fields, and facilities that support active and passive recreation.

Action 2.5. Encourage public participation in development of plans for maintenance and operation for parks, open space, fields, and facilities in the Rochester area including volunteer efforts.

Action 2.6. Coordinate with community originations and residents in the planning, development, operation, authorized use and maintenance of parks, trails, community facilities, and sports fields.

Goal 3. Develop a more walkable community by supporting pedestrian pathways, sidewalks and trails that connect people to places.

Action 3.1. Coordinate with county, state, Tribal, local organizations and residents to acquire land for trails, community connectors and open space corridors, such as the extension of the Gate-Belmore trail to Rochester and future trail expansion to Grand Mound.

Action 3.2. Coordinate maintenance and operation support for parks, trails and open space with other jurisdictions and supporting community groups.

Action 3.3. Safety and security shall be considered when reviewing and implementing plans for future trails, pathways, and greenways.

Action 3.4. Encourage the establishment of a trails system sign program that identifies access points and destinations throughout the region.

Goal 4. Create bicycle routes and multiuse pathways to provide safe, secure, and efficient bicycle connections for commuter, visitor, fitness, and recreational riders.

Action 4.1. Consult and coordinate with Rochester area community groups to define and prioritize local bicycle routes.

Action 4.2. Ensure that local bicycle routes connect with regional bicycle routes throughout the county and adjacent jurisdictions.

Action 4.3. Support and promote the Thurston County Trails Plan, the future Gate-Belmore and Grand Mound-Rochester trails, and any future trails to and from Rochester.

Appendices

Community Engagement and Outreach

The County conducted numerous community outreach efforts with Rochester residents for input and participation in the Rochester Subarea Plan update. Thurston County hosted four community open house events and one outreach event with Rochester High School students to discuss the Rochester and Grand Mound Subarea Plan update process, transportation projects in the Grand Mound area, and the Main Street Rochester project. In addition, staff attended numerous community meetings throughout the south county region, such as the Rochester-Grand Mound Chamber of Commerce, Rochester Citizens Group, Rochester School District Long-Term Facilities Planning, and STEDI. Three of the initial meetings were related to both the Rochester and Grand Mound Subarea Plan update process and one additional meeting that focused solely on the Rochester Subarea Plan update.

Dates of Community Outreach:

- February 24, 2018 (Open House, Rochester)
- March 8, 2018 (Open House, Grand Mound)
- May 30, 2018 (Outreach with Rochester High School, Rochester)
- June 16, 2018 (Outreach at Swede Day, Rochester)
- November 7, 2018 (Open House, Rochester)
- November 13, 2019 (Open House, Rochester)

The Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) project team also attended and presented information on Main Street Rochester Project and the Multimodal Transportation Plan during the community outreach.

References

Main Street Rochester Current Conditions Report, Thurston Regional Planning Council, 2018.

Main Street Rochester Multimodal Transportation Plan, Thurston Regional Planning Council, 2019.

Main Street Rochester Final Report, Thurston Regional Planning Council, 2019.

Rochester Subarea Plan, Thurston County, 1996.

Rochester School District Long Range Facilities Plan, OAC, September 2019.

Thurston County Stormwater Management Program Plan, December 2019.

Thurston County FY2019 Annual Action Plan, 2018-2022 Thurston County and Olympia, Regional Consolidated Plan, Prioritizing HOME and Community Development Block Grant Resources, September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020.

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