

A photograph of the Rochester Public Library building, featuring a prominent curved facade with large windows and a modern architectural style. The building is set against a clear blue sky. The foreground shows a paved plaza with some greenery and a person walking.

# Rochester Public Library Master Plan Status Report

---

Council Study Session  
14 April 2025

**MSRDesign**

**consultant team** | multi-faceted expertise



**Traci Lesneski**

**MSR Design**  
Master Plan Lead



**Susan Kent**

**S.R. Kent LLC**  
Library Operations Specialist



**Holly Yocom**

**Pathway Group**  
Library Funding Strategist

MSR Design ▪ Pathway Group ▪ S.R. Kent LLC ▪ Building Analytics ▪ Kraus Anderson ▪ By Design LLC ▪ SNG Research

planning +  
design

funding models  
+ fundraising

library  
operations

facilities condition  
analysis

cost  
estimating

co-design  
lead

survey design

**agenda** | status update on RPL master plan study

share update on process and findings

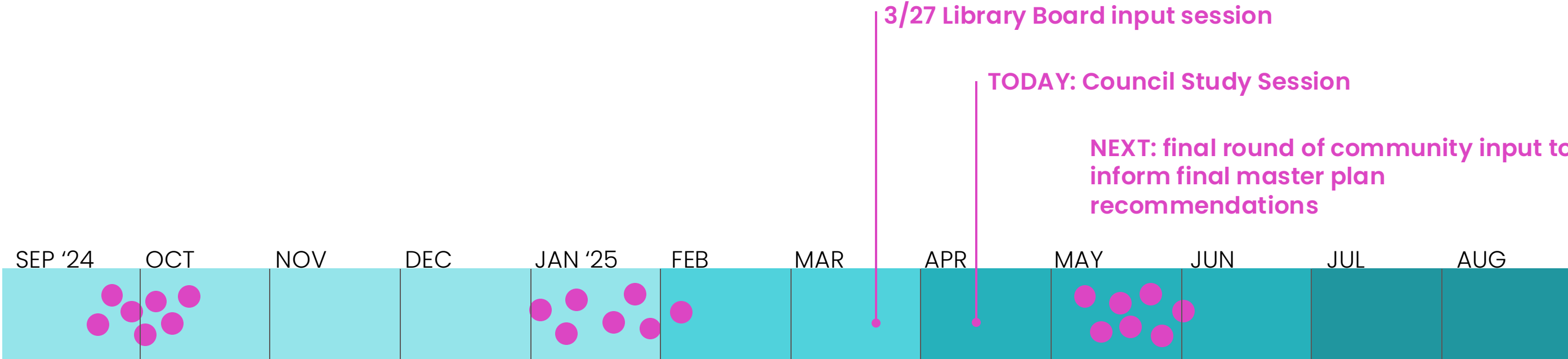
share preliminary recommendations

invite questions and council input

## **our charge** | RPL's stated master plan objectives

- engage in a robust, community co-design process to **learn community needs and desires**
- generate proposals for a **Facilities and Operations Master Plan** that support the library's mission
- lay out an **aspirational vision that is practical and manageable for implementation**
- **address deficiencies** in the current library service infrastructure for a rapidly growing city as well as **prepare for future space needs** and service delivery models
- **create a plan that enables RPL to respond effectively to changes** in community make-up, technology and telecommunications, service expectations, aging facilities, and other future needs

**process** | library master plan schedule



**DISCOVER**

existing conditions review,  
library service assessment,  
funding assessment

**ANALYZE**

develop draft library  
service and funding  
recommendations

**CREATE**

incorporate library  
board and council  
input to fine-tune  
recommendations;  
  
gather additional  
feedback from  
community

**FINALIZE**

deliver final plan

● community and stakeholder engagement

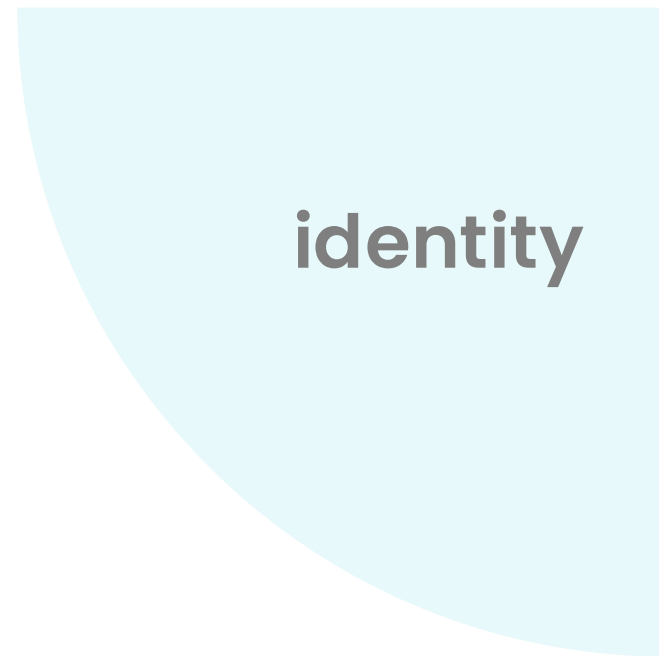
## **key findings** | community input

- RPL staff is highly valued, and its services are well-used.
- there is an opportunity to reach more people in the community.
- many community members would benefit from, and use, 21C library service offerings.
- RPL's downtown location is a barrier for use for many community members.
- physical presence of the library throughout the city is highly desired.

**draft recommendations** | four categories



**Raise the library's  
profile.**



Align operations  
to future needs.

**operations**

Raise the library's  
profile.

**identity**



Align operations  
to future needs.



Raise the library's  
profile.

Foster culture of  
innovation.  
Create alignment with  
goals of city + county.

Align operations  
to future needs.

Raise the library's  
profile.



Foster culture of  
innovation.  
Create alignment with  
goals of city + county.

Disperse library  
services.  
Renovate the  
downtown library.

# UNDERPINNINGS

---



**broad and deep input** | co-design process, stakeholder, staff, and community input

10

**outreach activities in the community**

283

**responses from community members**

5

**visioning sessions with staff and stakeholders**

17

**one-on-one key stakeholder interviews**

3

**facilitated co-design sessions**



**through-line from community input** | the library is loved by those who use it

"We use the second-floor meeting room every month, thank you!"

"It's an amazing children's library"

"I love the bookmobile, it is so close to my home."

"Love the library!"

"Thank you for so many amazing offerings."

"Excellent digital selection; Libby, eBooks, eAudiobooks. Please get more!"

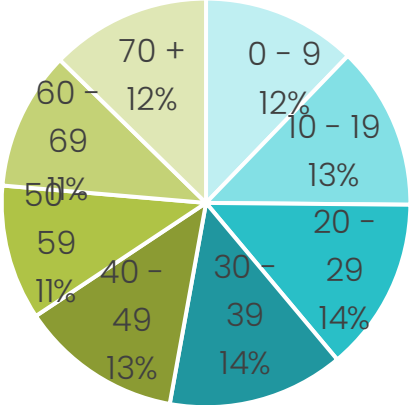
"All choices [downtown, bookmobile, digital] are excellent. Great collection."

"Love the seed library!"

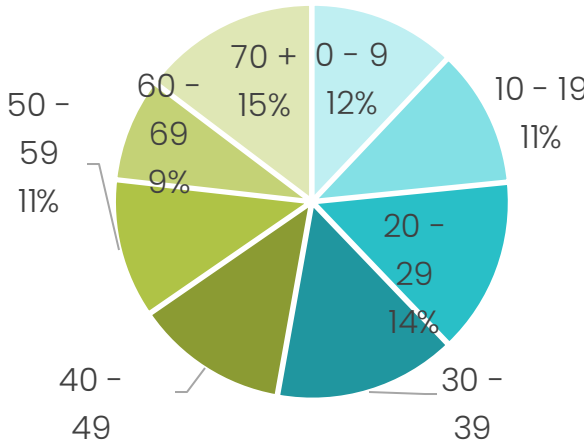
Most LGBTQIA+ felt that library was welcoming to them [codesign]

"I love my library, lots of things to do."

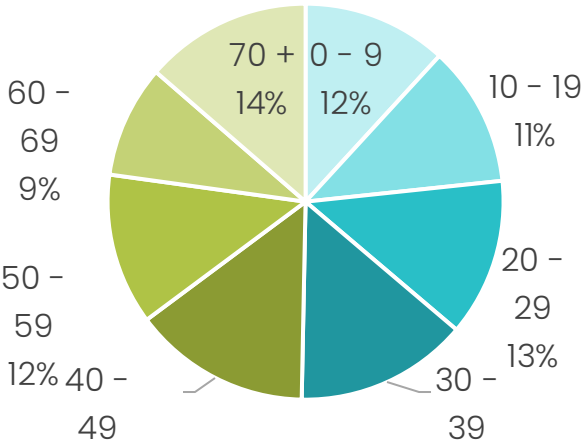
**local context | demographics**



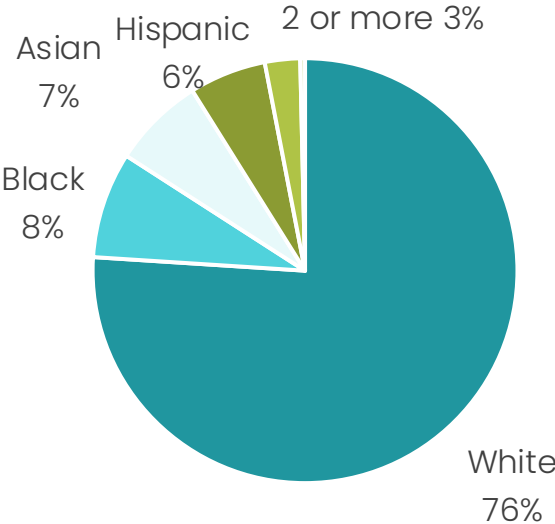
**Age Cohorts in 2025**



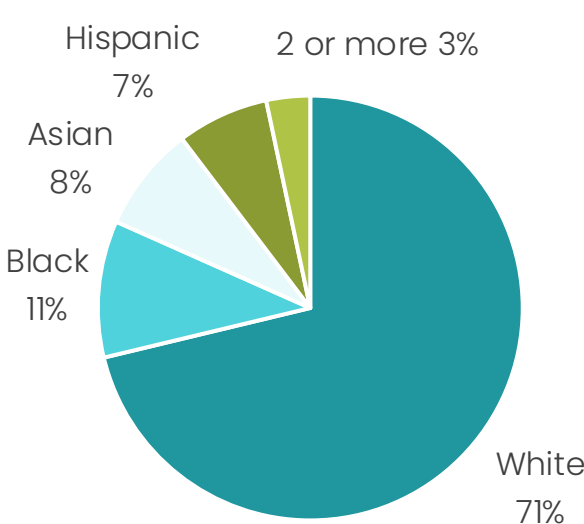
**Age Cohorts in 2035**



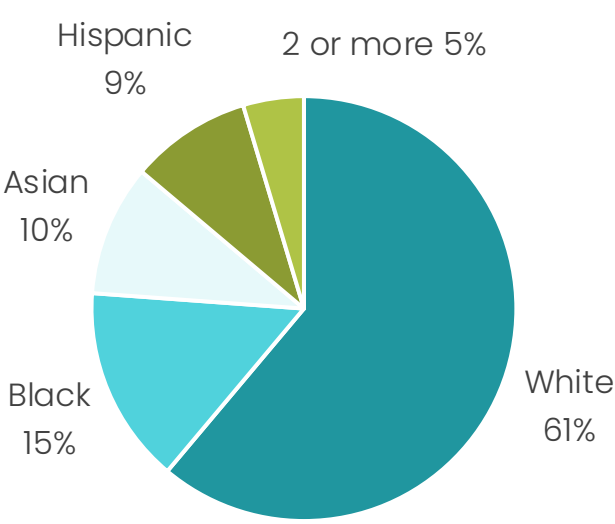
**Age Cohorts in 2055**



**Race Cohorts in 2025**



**Race Cohorts in 2035**



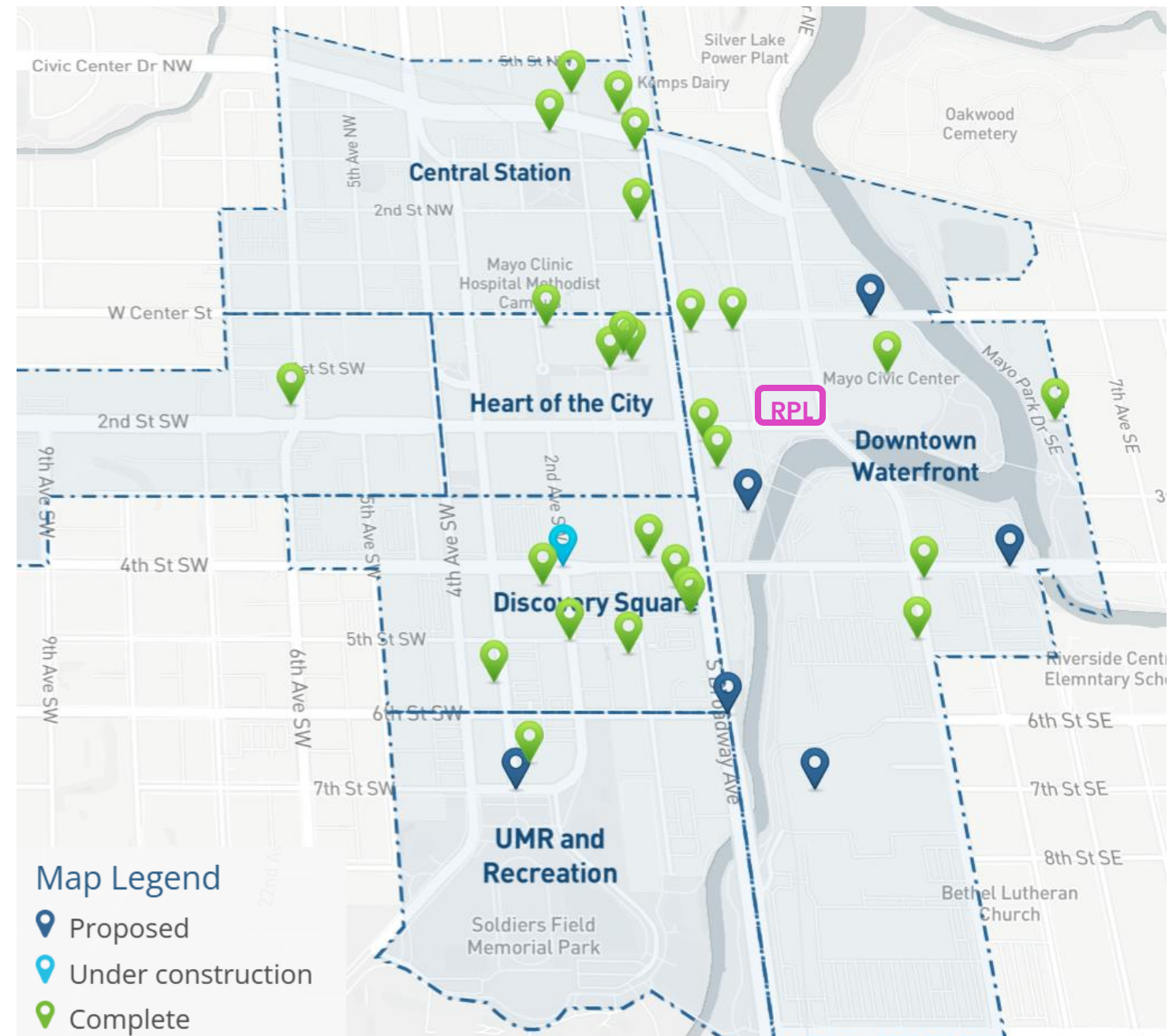
**Race Cohorts in 2055**

*data source: 2024 Minnesota State Demographic Center*

## local context | future changes for the city and region

### DMC Guiding Principles

1. Establish a **bold and compelling vision** for Rochester and the Destination Medical Center
2. Sustain Rochester and Southeast Minnesota as a destination medical center and **economic engine** for the state
3. Implement a comprehensive strategy to **drive economic development** and investment
4. Align **development** with market-driven framework and strategies
5. Create a **dynamic and accessible urban core**
6. Develop mobility and transit solutions to **support growth**
7. Create a model for sustainability
8. Deploy **technology and innovation** to promote a globally competitive destination



# City of Rochester's vision

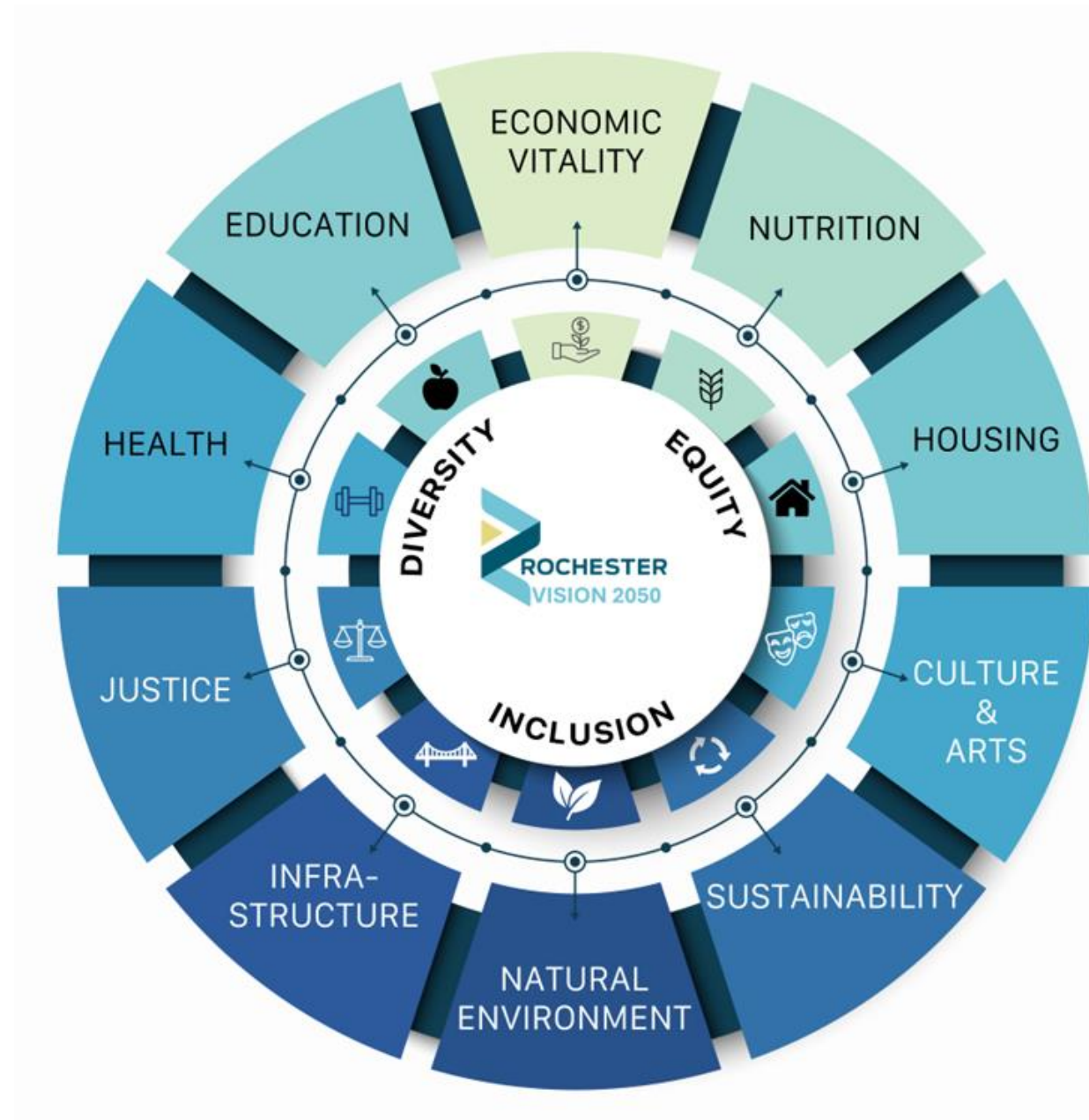


# Mayor's Vision 2050

"Where all people are treated with dignity and respect... residents, employees, and visitors enjoy a high quality of life... business and industry thrive..."

"People come here to do exciting work they can't do elsewhere."

"Renowned for its reputation as a center for growth and innovation."



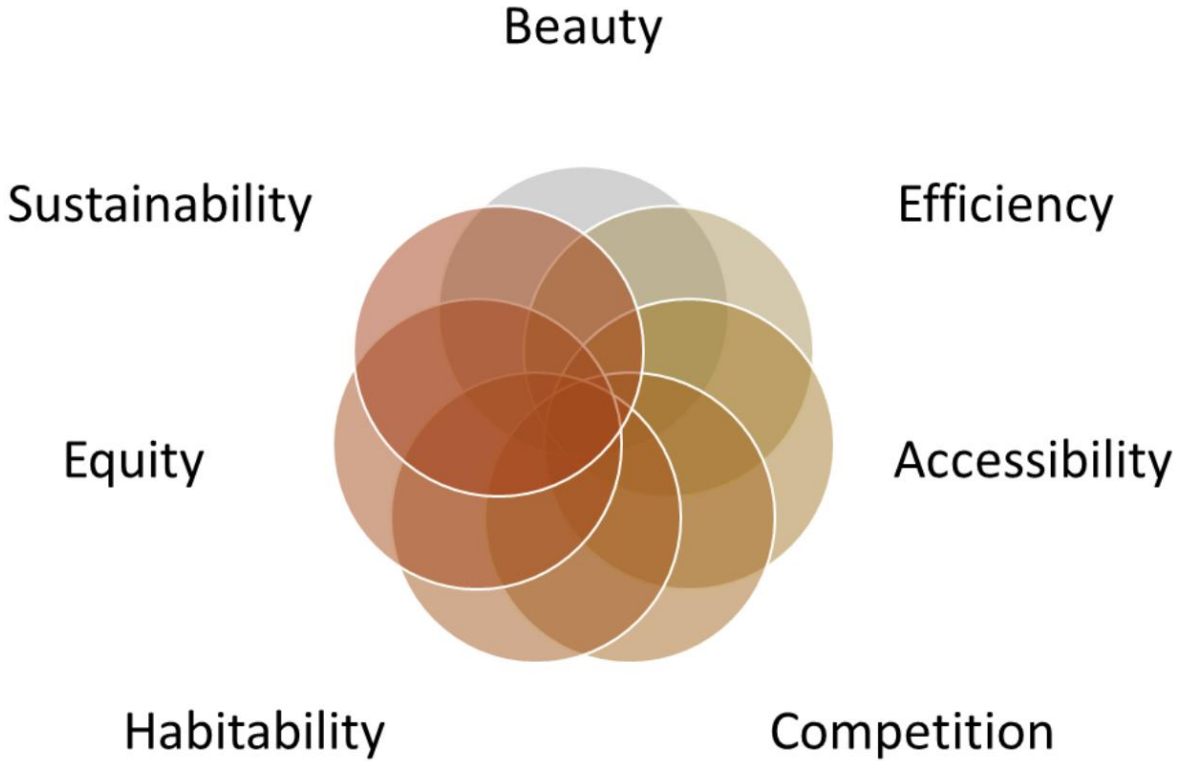
"With the expansion of Mayo Clinic and DMC growth, Rochester is a global destination for health and wellness and so much more."

"...welcoming and diverse"

"Great place to live at all stages of life."

"...the world's premier location for health and wellness."

# Olmsted County General Land Use Plan 2045



Jurisdiction	2015	2025	2035	2045	2015-2045 Growth		Share of Growth
Rochester	112,089	128,484	147,516	162,277	50,188	45%	82%
Byron	5,320	6,194	7,244	8,724	3,404	64%	6%
Chatfield	2,779	3,194	3,555	3,866	1,087	39%	1%
Dover	752	917	1,095	1,255	503	67%	1%
Eyota	2,038	2,306	2,573	2,809	771	38%	1%
Oronoco	1,443	1,748	2,236	2,575	1,132	78%	2%
Pine Island	3,263	3,974	4,701	5,342	2,079	64%	2%
Stewartville	6,153	7,045	8,001	8,937	2,784	45%	5%
<b>Total for Municipalities</b>	<b>129,775</b>	<b>149,324</b>	<b>172,001</b>	<b>190,482</b>	<b>60,707</b>	<b>47%</b>	
Suburban Townships	12,327	12,695	13,312	13,788	1,461	12%	2%
Exurban Townships	4,447	4,432	4,428	4,298	-149	-3%	-0%
Rural Townships	4,785	4,651	4,459	4,213	-572	-12%	-1%
<b>Olmsted County</b>	<b>151,334</b>	<b>171,102</b>	<b>194,200</b>	<b>212,781</b>	<b>61,447</b>	<b>41%</b>	

Table showing projected population growth in Olmsted County by political jurisdiction

Employment Sector	Sector Share of Employment		Sector Share of Establishment		Sector Share of Wages Paid		Change in Sector Share		
	2000	2017	2000	2017	2000	2017	Employment	Establishments	Wages Paid
Resources and Mining	0.2%	0.3%	0.9%	1.4%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.6%	0.0%
Construction	4.9%	3.9%	12.6%	10.6%	5.3%	4.1%	-1.0%	-2.0%	-1.2%
Manufacturing	15.2%	6.9%	3.5%	3.1%	22.1%	8.9%	-8.3%	-0.4%	-13.2%
Trade	16.4%	14.2%	25.8%	21.7%	10.8%	7.3%	-2.1%	-4.1%	-3.4%
Information	1.2%	1.7%	1.8%	1.5%	1.2%	1.6%	0.5%	-0.3%	0.4%
Finance	2.9%	2.1%	10.5%	10.1%	2.7%	1.9%	-0.7%	-0.4%	-0.7%
Business Services	6.3%	5.3%	12.9%	13.3%	5.6%	4.4%	-1.0%	0.4%	-1.2%
Education / Health	38.0%	50.9%	8.9%	12.1%	43.6%	63.8%	12.9%	3.1%	20.2%
Leisure / Hospitality	8.4%	9.1%	9.9%	11.6%	3.2%	3.0%	0.7%	1.8%	-0.2%
Other Services	2.7%	2.5%	11.7%	12.5%	1.6%	1.2%	-0.1%	0.8%	-0.4%
Public Admin	3.9%	3.1%	1.5%	2.0%	3.9%	3.5%	-0.9%	0.5%	-0.4%

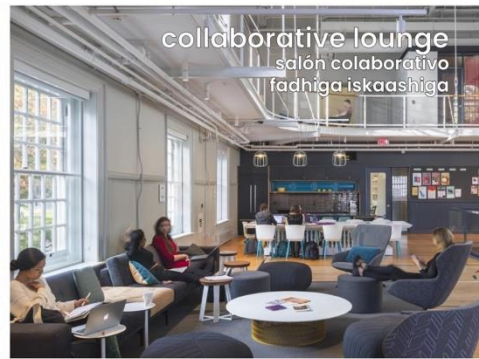
Employment sector share in Olmsted County

data source: Olmsted County Planning Department

# national + regional context | the 21<sup>st</sup> century library



flexible meeting rooms  
salas de reuniones flexibles  
qolalka shirarka dabaacsan



collaborative lounge  
salón colaborativo  
fadhiga iskaashiga



outdoor programming  
programación al aire libre  
barnaamijyada dibadda



space to host events  
espacio para organizar eventos  
meel lagu martigeliyo dhacdooyinka



incubators  
incubadoras  
ilbaxayaasha

commercial kitchen  
cocina comercial  
jikada ganaesiga



puppet theater  
teatro de marionetas  
masraxa-puppet



dedicated teen space  
espacio dedicado para adolescentes  
meel dhalinyaro ah oo go'an



music production studio  
estudio de producción musical  
istuudiyaha wax soo saarka muusikada



library of things  
biblioteca de cosas  
maktabadda waxyaalaha

## community hubs / centros comunitarios / xarumaha bulshada



fitness studio  
estudio de fitness  
istuudiyaha jirdhiska



children's exhibits  
exposiciones infantiles  
bandhigyada carruurta



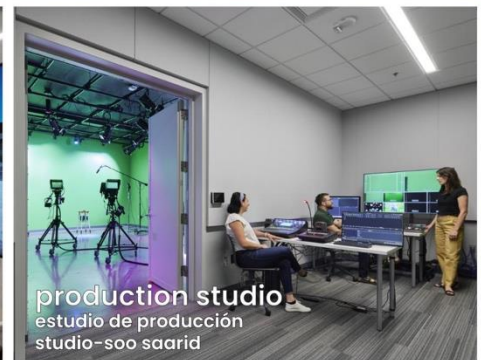
demonstration kitchen  
cocina de demostración  
jikada bandhiga



resource centers  
centros de recursos  
xarumaha kheyraadka



job skills training  
capacitación en habilidades laborales  
tababarka xirfadaña shaqada



production studio  
estudio de producción  
studio-soo saarid



buildings that promote movement  
edificios que promuevan el movimiento  
dhismayaal kor u qaada dhaqdhaqaaqa



sensory room  
sala sensorial  
qolka dareenka



rehearsal space  
espacio de ensayo  
meel ku celcelinta



educational gardens  
jardines educativos  
beeraha waxbarashada



outdoor community space  
espacio comunitario al aire libre  
barxadda akhriska hadhsan



shaded reading patio  
patio de lectura con sombra  
barxadda akhriska hadhsan

## a place for whole body wellbeing / un lugar para el bienestar integral / meel loogu talagalay fayoobida jirka oo dhan

## **national + regional context** | the 21<sup>st</sup> century library

### **Libraries of the past were...**

- **Quiet** spaces focused mostly on printed books and reading
- **In-person-only** (services and resources)
- **Individual-focused**, primarily used for individual study or research
- **Fixed** programs and traditional learning formats
- **Limited** hours, locations, flexibility

### **21c libraries are...**

- **Active learning hubs** offering hands-on experiences like maker spaces, digital media labs, food demonstrations, 3D printing, and STEM/STEAM programs
- **AND Places of respite** offering ability to be alone, or “alone together.”
- **Technology access points** with free Wi-Fi, computers, and loanable devices like hotspots and tablets
- **Flexible community spaces** for group study, individual digital meetings, collaboration, group meetings, performances, and civic engagement
- **Lifelong learning centers** where children, teens, adults, and seniors can grow together through reading, doing, and discovering
- **Responsive community platforms** that reflect and support the unique needs of diverse communities through programs and resources
- **Dispersed** extending library access beyond a traditional library building and meeting people where they are
- **Workforce and career support hubs** including job search help, résumé workshops, and skills training
- **For all ages** with classes and training covering digital literacy, language learning, financial education, and more
- **Resource hubs** for navigating things like housing assistance, legal aid, and government services through partnerships and trained staff

## **national + regional context** | current and emerging trends for libraries

### **Digital on the rise.**

- more materials will be available in digital formats.
- collections of physical materials will stay at current levels in the short term (and decline in the longer term).

### **Content creation is no longer a “nice to have” service for libraries.**

- community members need access to the tools required to thrive in the 21st C.

### **Adaptability is critical.**

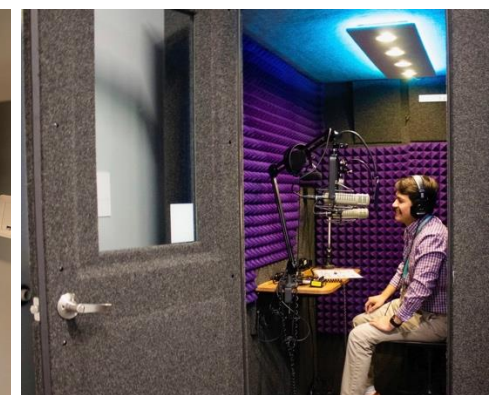
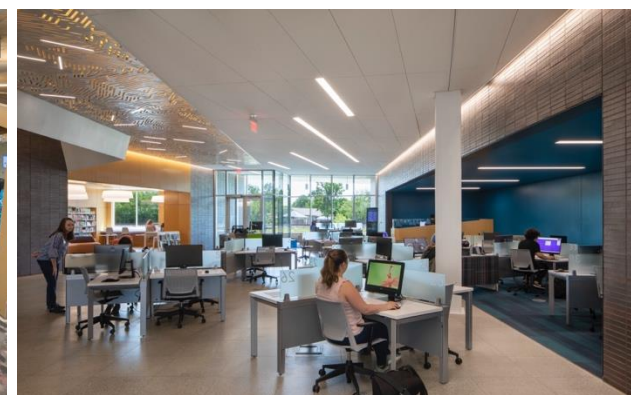
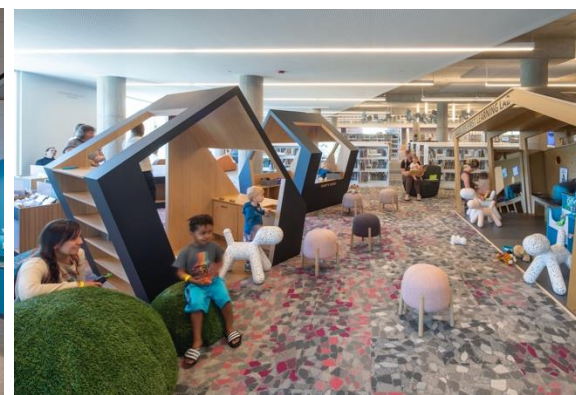
- service needs are evolving at a higher rate of change—and staff must, too.
- library buildings must be easily adaptable as services and technology evolve.

### **Hyper-local.**

- no formulas to follow—libraries must reflect and develop what their communities need.

### **Partnerships are integral to the service equation.**

- co-location and/or robust collaborative programming is necessary to deliver all the community needs to thrive.





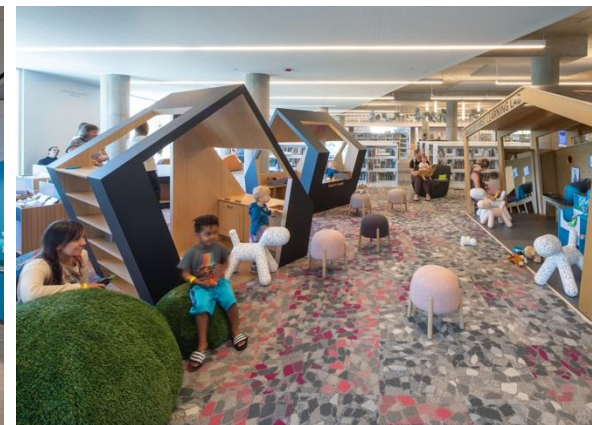
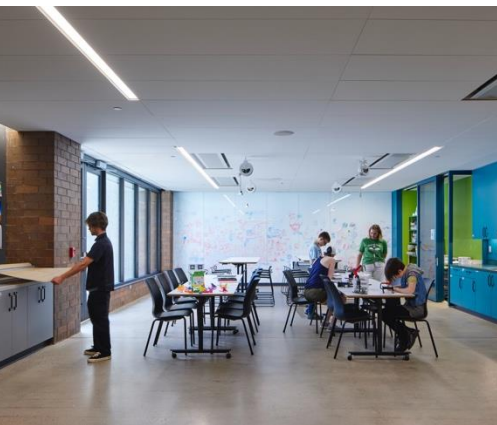
# OPPORTUNITIES FOR RPL

---

**RPL as 21<sup>st</sup> century library** | provide community-centered services that...

**...embrace physical and digital resources, programs, and services.**

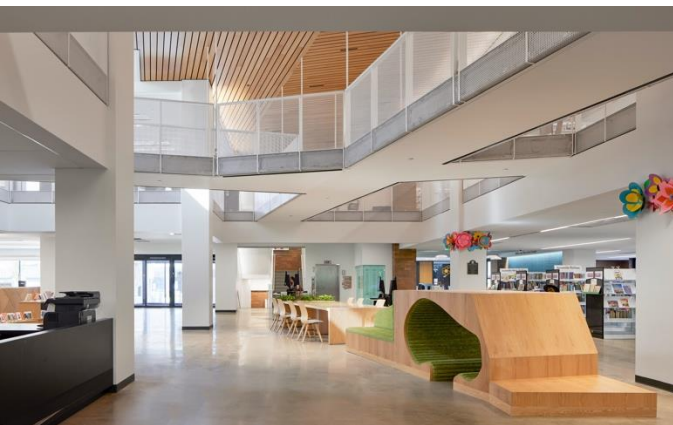
- provide physical and digital collections that are responsive to customer demands and community needs.
- offer resources for individuals to create and share content.
- encourage literacy and learning through services both traditional and innovative.
- develop services that create seamless transitions between active and passive use of sources.
- enhance the customer experience by providing latest technologies for public use and library operations.



**RPL as 21<sup>st</sup> century library** | provide community-centered services that...

**...position the library as a hub for lifelong learning.**

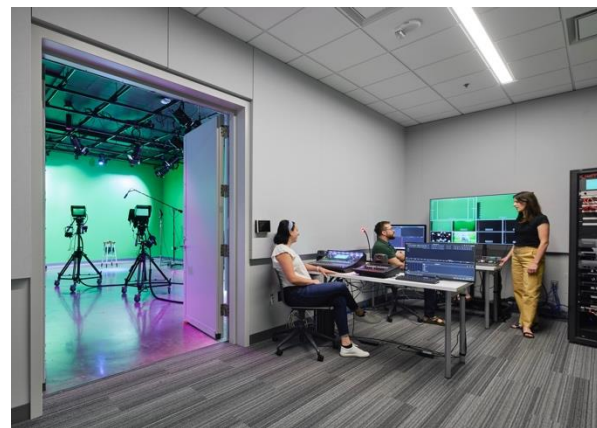
- provide flexible and sustainable physical spaces for community interaction, collaboration, collections, and customer-centered creation and maker spaces.
- combine interactivity, media, people and space.
- add to the continued vitality of Rochester in a welcoming environment where community members feel empowered and enlightened by their own learning experiences.
- become an active node in residents' daily lives, in which people connect with one another and work collaboratively, as well as individually.



**RPL as 21<sup>st</sup> century library** | provide community-centered services that...

**...spark innovation and entrepreneurship.**

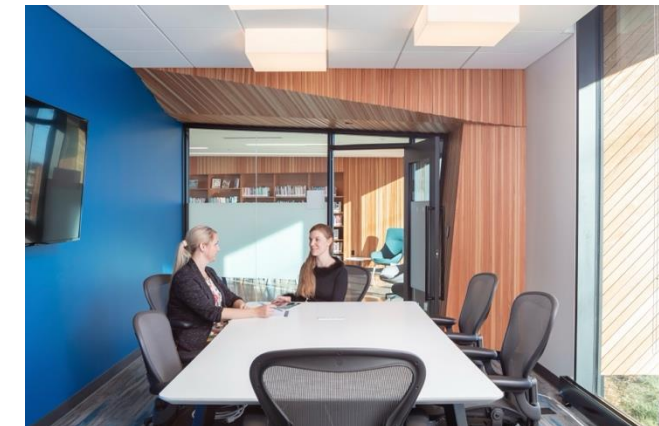
- support buildings designed for opportunities for limitless learning, bridging the education gap, supporting interest-driven learning and multiple literacies.
- support business and career success through resources and collaborative spaces.
- provide flexible and sustainable physical spaces for community interaction, collaboration, collections and customer-center creation and maker spaces.



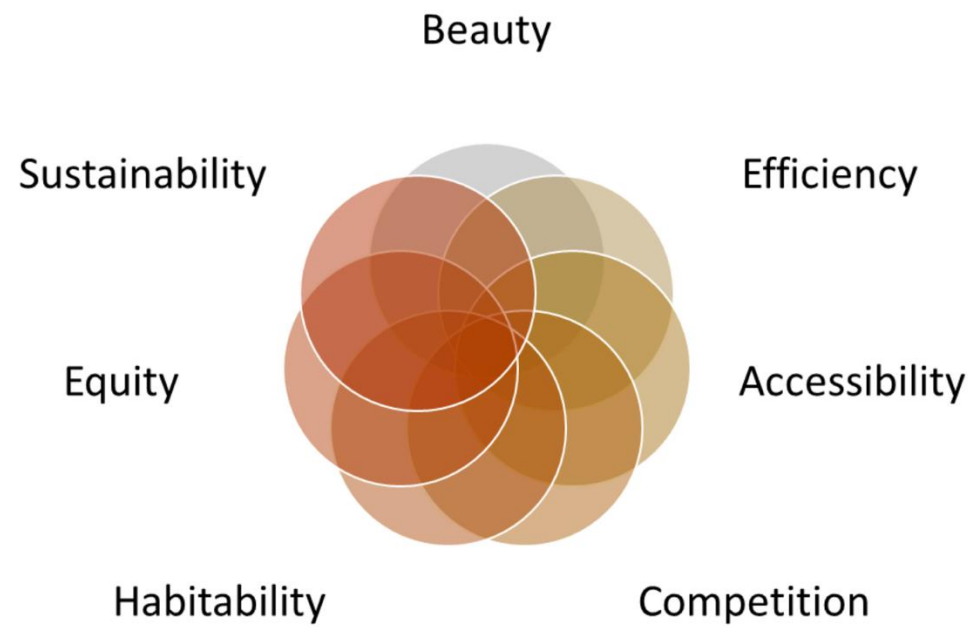
**RPL as 21<sup>st</sup> century library** | provide community-centered services that..

**...serve a key role as a collaborator in Rochester's social service network.**

- provide space for training, partners and private meetings.
- create a welcoming environment where community members feel empowered and enlightened by their own learning experiences.
- provide spaces inclusive to neurodivergent individuals.



# RPL as 21<sup>st</sup> century library | critical contributor to the regional vision



**City Vision**

**Rochester** is a City that cares. Where all people are treated with dignity and respect. Where residents, employees, and visitors enjoy a high quality of life. Where business and industry thrive, and where the land and environment are renewed and sustained for the benefit of all. It is a welcoming and diverse community.

**Renowned** for its reputation as a center for growth and innovation.

**Characterized** by its safe and friendly neighborhoods.

**Committed** to health and wellness for its people.

**Connected** both physically and socially.

**Dedicated** to the sustainable and responsible use of public resources.

## **RPL as 21<sup>st</sup> century library | challenges**

**Downtown realities.**

**Misalignment regarding goals + vision for future of library.**

**Lack of awareness about RPL and its offerings.**

**Untapped philanthropic awareness + support from community for the library.**

**Prevalent ethos of only using services in one's own neighborhood.**

**RPL as 21<sup>st</sup> century library** | the big question

**How can RPL be a vibrant, exciting, energetic, and innovative institution that enhances and expands the vision of the City of Rochester, County, and the development of the DMC?**



# ◀ DRAFT ▶ RECOMMENDATIONS

---

**draft recommendations**



**draft recommendations** | identity



## **Raise the library's profile in the community.**

- increase outreach efforts to various diverse communities in Rochester
- utilize multiple communication tools and outlets to inform the public about library services and resources.
- develop strong partnerships for collaboration and cooperation on services.

## **Raise the library's profile with city and county leadership.**

- promote library's value proposition with city and county and elected officials.
- take group of essential city leaders on library tour to expose them to 21C library services.
- educate leaders about how the library promotes city's goals and community's growth.

**draft recommendations** | leadership



## **Foster a culture of innovation and transformation.**

- provide ongoing staff development opportunities for staff at all levels to learn about innovative approaches and best practices in 21st century public library services.

## **Develop strong leaders for the challenges ahead.**

- provide training for staff to engage with and navigate public policy processes to effectively advance organizational outcomes.
- communications training: develop tailored messaging and persuasive communication techniques for engaging with community members and leaders
- promote a culture of building strong external relationships that enhance the mission of RPL.

**draft recommendations** | leadership



## **Create alignment with goals of city/county.**

- position library staff as integral partners within the city system by actively engaging in city initiatives.
- create collaborative partnerships with other city divisions to broaden the library's patron base and cultivate new community relationships.

## **Strengthen the Library Foundation.**

- strengthen collaboration with the library foundation through renewed engagement.
- redefine the foundation's mission in partnership with the library and establish shared annual goals.
- enhance fundraising effectiveness through targeted training programs for library and foundation board and staff.
- develop a joint strategic fundraising plan with clear fiscal objectives.
- align Friends', Foundation, and Library's mission and purpose.

**draft recommendations** | library operations



Update collections management strategy.

Review and update job classifications.

Align annual budget with service and collection usage.

Review and improve technology.

Review and improve (as needed) programming for all ages.

## draft recommendations | facilities



### Address parking issues (both perceived and real).

- develop public awareness campaign about parking information.
- investigate validated parking.
- partner with city and/or foundation to expand free parking—or a pilot of it.

### Disperse services throughout the city.

- pilot storefronts/satellites in growth zones.
  - small location offering tailored services and programming
  - 12–24 month duration to start; extend if successful
  - opportunity to try new services and service models
  - potential to increase awareness of the library and build support for a permanent expansion of services or branch location
- explore model of smaller downtown footprint with satellite branches.
- expand bookmobile coverage.

**draft recommendations** | example of a pilot satellite program



Anne Arundel Co. Public Library | 3,000 sf full-service library in mall (designer unknown)

**draft recommendations** | example of a pilot satellite program



Dallas Public Library | children's branch in mall (designer unknown)



**draft recommendations** | example of co-location



Missoula Public Library | library + 4 mission-aligned partners (designed by MSR Design)

**draft recommendations** | example of co-location



Milwaukee Public Library Villard Branch | with housing (designed by Engberg Anderson)

**draft recommendations** | example of co-location



Saratoga Springs UT | with city hall (designed by MSR Design)

**draft recommendations** | example of co-location



Highland Park MN | with rec center (designed by LES)

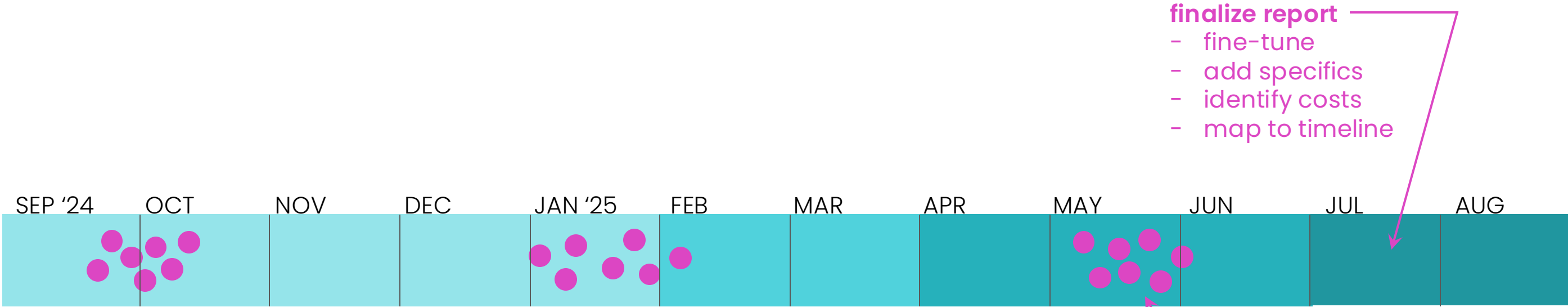
**draft recommendations** | facilities



## **Renovate the downtown library with user-centered focus.**

- utilize existing square footage better.
- create a more welcoming and accessible entry experience.
- improve accessibility throughout, in public and staff spaces.
- reallocate Friend's spaces for public use (particularly ground level).
- improve the teen space.
- increase number of small meeting spaces for the public.
- consider reinstating curbside pickup (to alleviate parking concerns).
- improve wayfinding (e.g., parking color-coded, interior signage, collection naming conventions).

# next steps



## DISCOVER

existing conditions review, library service assessment, funding assessment

## ANALYZE

develop draft library service and funding recommendations

## CREATE

incorporate library board and council input to fine-tune recommendations;

gather additional feedback from community

## FINALIZE

deliver final plan

● community and stakeholder engagement